

This was a *nobleman*, and probably had a *great household*, but when he comes into Christ's school he brings them all along with him. What a blessed change was here in this house, occasioned by the sickness of the child! this should reconcile us to afflictions, we know not what good may follow from them. Probably the conversion of this *nobleman*, and his family at Capernaum, might invite Christ to come afterward and settle at Capernaum as his head quarters in Galilee. When great men receive the gospel, they may be instrumental to bring it to the places where they live.

Lastly, Here is the evangelist's remark upon this cure; *ver. 54. This is the second miracle*; referring to *chap. ii. 11.* where the turning water into wine is said to be the first; that was soon after his first return out of Judea, this soon after his second. In Judea he had wrought many miracles, *chap. iii. 2.—iv. 45.* they had the first offer, but being driven thence he wrought miracles in Galilee: Somewhere or other Christ will find a welcome. People may if they please shut the sun out of *their own houses*, but cannot shut it out of *the world*. This is noted to be the *second miracle*, (1.) To remind us of the first wrought in the same place some months before. *Fresh mercies* should revive the remembrance of former mercies, as former mercies should encourage our hopes of further mercies. Christ keeps account of his favours, whether we do or no. (2.) To let us know that *this cure* was before those many cures which the other evangelists mention to be wrought in Galilee, *Matt. iv. 23. Mark i. 34. Luke iv. 40.* Probably this cure, the patient being a person of quality, was the more talked of for that reason, and sent him crowds of patients; when this nobleman applied himself to Christ, multitudes followed. What abundance of good may great men do, if they be good men!

## CHAP. V.

*We have in the gospels a faithful record of all that Jesus began both to do, and to teach, Acts i. 1. These two are interwoven, because what he taught explained what he did, and what he did confirmed what he taught. Accordingly, we have in this chapter a miracle and a sermon. (1.) The miracle was the cure of an impotent man that had been diseased thirty eight years, with the circumstances of that cure, ver. 1—16. (2.) The sermon was Christ's vindication of himself before the Sanhedrin, when he was profecuted as a criminal for healing the man on the sabbath-day; In which, (1.) He asserts his authority as Messiah, and Mediator between God and man, ver. 17—29. (2.) He proves it by the testimony of his Father, of John Baptist, of his miracles, and of the scriptures of the Old Testament, and condemns the Jews for their unbelief, ver. 30—47.*

1. **A**FTER this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep-market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, having five porches. 3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 5. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. 10. ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath-day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. 11. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk. 12. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk? 13. And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. 14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. 15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole. 16. And

therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

This miraculous cure is not recorded by any other of the evangelists, who confine themselves mostly to the miracles wrought in Galilee, but John relates those wrought at Jerusalem. Concerning this observe,

First, *The time when* this cure was wrought; it was at a *feast of the Jews*, i. e. the passover, for that was the most celebrated feast. Christ, though residing in Galilee, yet *went up to Jerusalem*, at the feast, *ver. 1.*

1. Because it was an *ordinance of God*, which as a *subject* he would observe, being made under the law; though as a *son*, he might have pleaded an exemption. Thus he would teach us to attend religious assemblies, *Heb. x. 25.*

2. Because it was an *opportunity of good*; for, (1.) There were great numbers gathered together there at that time; it was a general rendezvous at least of all serious, thinking people from all parts of the country, besides proselytes from other nations: And wisdom must cry in the places of concourse, *Prov. i. 21.* (2.) It was to be hoped that they were in a *good frame*, for they came together to worship God, and to spend their time in religious exercises. Now a mind inclined to devotion, and sequestering itself to the exercises of piety, lies very open to the further discoveries of divine light and love, and to it Christ will be acceptable.

Secondly, *The place where* this cure was wrought; at the pool of Bethesda, which had a miraculous healing virtue in it, and is here particularly described, *ver. 2, 3, 4.*

1. Where it was situated; at Jerusalem by the sheep-market; ἐπὶ τῇ πρεβηθαικῇ; it might as well be rendered, the sheep-cote, where the sheep were kept; or the sheep-gate, which we read of, *Neh. iii. 1.* through which the sheep were brought, as the sheep-market, where they were sold. Some think it was near the temple, and if so, it yielded a melancholy, but profitable spectacle to those that went up to the temple to pray.

2. How it was called; it was a pool, (a pond, or bath) which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, the house of mercy; for therein appeared much of the mercy of God to the sick and diseased. In a world of so much misery as this is, it is well there are some Bethesda's, houses of mercy; remedies against these maladies, that the scene is not all melancholy. An alms-house, so Dr. Hammond. Dr. Lightfoot's conjecture is, that this was the upper pool, *Isa. vii. 3.* and the old pool, *Isa. xxii. 11.* That it had been used for washing from ceremonial pollutions, for convenience of which, the porches were built to dress and undress in, but was lately become medicinal.

3. How it was fitted up; it had five porches, cloysters, or piazzas, or roofed walks, in which the sick lay. Thus the charity of men concurred with the mercy of God for the relief of the distressed. Nature has provided remedies, but men must provide hospitals.

4. How it was frequented with sick and cripples; *ver. 3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk.* How many are the afflictions of the afflicted in this world? How full of complaints are all places, and what multitudes of impotent folk? It may do us good to visit the hospitals sometimes, that we may take occasion from the calamities of others to thank God for our comforts. The evangelist instances in three sorts of diseased people that lay here, blind, halt, and withered, or sinew shrunk, either in one particular part, as the man with the withered hand, or all over paralytick. These are mentioned, because being least able to help themselves into the water, they lay longest waiting in the porches. Those that were sick of these bodily diseases, took the pains to come far, and had the patience to wait long for a cure; any of us would have done the same, and we ought to do so; but O! that men were as wise for their souls, and as solicitous to get their spiritual diseases healed! We are all by nature impotent folk in spiritual things, blind, halt, and withered, but effectual provision is made for our cure, if we will but observe orders.

5. What virtue it had for the cure of these impotent folk; *ver. 4. An angel went down, and troubled the water; and who so first stepped in was made whole.* That this strange virtue in the pool was natural, or artificial rather, and was the effect of the washing of the sacrifices, which impregnated the water with I know not what healing virtue, even for blind people; and that this angel was a messenger, a common person sent down to stir the water, is altogether groundless; there was a room in the temple on purpose to wash the sacrifices in. Expositors generally agree, that the virtue this pool had was supernatural. It is true, the Jewish writers, who do not use to be sparing in recounting the praises of Jerusalem, do none of them make the least mention of this healing pool; of which silence in this matter, perhaps this was the reason, that it was taken for a presage of the near approach of the Messiah, and therefore, they who denied him to be come, industriously concealed such an indication of his coming; so that this here is all the account we have of it. Observe,



1. The preparation of the medicine by an angel, who went down into the pool, and stirred the water. Angels are God's servants, and friends to mankind; and perhaps are more active in the removing of diseases, as evil angels in the inflicting of them, than we are aware of. Raphael, the apocryphal name of an angel, signifies, *medicina Dei*, God's physick, or physician rather: See what mean offices the holy angels condescend to, for the good of men. If we would do the will of God as the angels do it, we must think nothing below us but sin. The troubling of the water, was the signal given of the descent of the angel; as the going upon the tops of the mulberry trees was to David, and then they must bestir themselves. The waters of the sanctuary are then healing, when they are put in motion. Ministers must stir up the gift that is in them: When they are cold and dull in their ministrations, the waters settle, and are not apt to heal. The angel descended to stir the water, not daily, perhaps not frequently, but at a certain season; some think, at the three solemn feasts, to grace those solemnities; or, now and then, as infinite Wisdom saw fit: God is a free agent in dispensing his favours.

2. The operation of the medicine; *Whoever first stepped in was made whole*. Here is, (1.) A miraculous extent of the virtue, as to the diseases cured; what disease soever it was, this water cured it. Natural and artificial baths are as hurtful in some cases, as they are useful in others, but this was a remedy for every malady, even for those that came from contrary causes. The power of miracles succeeds, where the power of nature succumbs. (2.) A miraculous limitation of the virtue, as to the persons cured; he that first stepped in had the benefit, i. e. he, or they that stepped in presently were cured, not those that lingered and came in after. This teaches us to observe and improve our opportunities, and to look about us, that we slip not a season which may never return. The angel stirred the waters, but left the diseased to themselves to get in. God has put virtue into the scriptures and ordinances, for he would have healed us; but if we do not make a due improvement of them, it is our own fault, we would not be healed.

Now this is all the account we have of this standing miracle; it is uncertain when it began, and when it ceased. Some conjecture it began when Eliahib, the high-priest, began the building of the wall about Jerusalem, and sanctified it with prayer; and that God testified his acceptance, by putting this virtue into the adjoining pool. Some think it began now lately, at Christ's birth; nay, others at his baptism. Dr. Lightfoot finding in *Josephus Antiq.* l. 15. c. 7. mention of a great earthquake in the seventh year of Herod, thirty years before Christ's birth, supposeth, that since there used to be earthquakes at the descent of angels, that then the angel first descended to stir this water. Some think it ceased with this miracle, others at Christ's death, however, it is certain it had a gracious signification.

1. It was a token of God's good will to that people, and an indication, that though they had been long without prophets and miracles, yet God had not cast them off; though they were now an oppressed, despised people, and many were ready to say, *Where are all the wonders that our fathers told us of?* God did hereby let them know, that he had still a kindness for the city of their solemnities.

We may from hence take occasion to acknowledge with thankfulness God's power and goodness in the mineral waters, that contribute so much to the health of mankind, for God made the fountains of water, *Rev. xiv. 7.*

2. It was a type of the Messiah, who is the fountain opened; and was intended to raise peoples expectations of him, who is the sun of righteousness, that riseth with healing under his wings. These waters had formerly been used for purifying, now for healing, to signify both the cleansing and curing virtue of the blood of Christ, that incomparable bath, which heals all our diseases. The waters of Siloam, which filled this pool, signified the kingdom of David, and of Christ, the Son of David, *Isa. viii. 6.* fitly therefore have they now this sovereign virtue put into them. The laver of regeneration is to us, as Bethesda's pool, healing our spiritual diseases; not at certain seasons, but at all times: *Whoever will, let him come.*

Thirdly, The patient on whom this cure was wrought, *ver. 5.* One that had been infirm thirty-eight years.

1. His disease was grievous; he had an infirmity, a weakness; he had lost the use of his limbs, at least on one side, as is usual in palsies. It is sad to have the body so disabled, that instead of being the soul's instrument, it is become, even in the affairs of this life, its burthen. What reason have we to thank God for bodily strength, and to use it for him, and pity those who are his prisoners!

2. The duration of it was tedious, thirty eight years; he was lame longer than most live. Many are so long disabled for the offices of life, that as the psalmist complains, they seem to be made in vain; for suffering, not for service; born to be always dying. Shall we complain of one wearisome night, or one ill fit, who perhaps for many years have scarce known what it has been to be a day sick, when many others, better than we, have scarce known what it has been to be a day well. Mr. Baxter's note on this passage is very affecting: "How great a mercy was it, to live thirty eight years under God's wholesome discipline. O No. xciv.

"my God (saith he) I thank thee for the like discipline of fifty-eight years; how safe a life is this, in comparison of full prosperity and pleasure!"

Fourthly, The cure, and the circumstances of it briefly related, *ver. 6, 7, 8, 9.*

1. *Jesus saw him lie*. Observe, when Christ came up to Jerusalem, he visited not the palaces, but the hospitals, which is an instance of his humility and condescension, and tender compassion; and an indication of his great design in coming into the world, which was to seek and save the sick and wounded. There was a great multitude of poor cripples here at Bethesda, but Christ fastened his eye upon this one, and singled him out from the rest, because he was senior of the house, and in a more deplorable condition than any of the rest; and Christ delights to help the helpless; and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. Perhaps his companions in tribulation insulted over him, because he had been often disappointed of a cure, therefore Christ took him for his patient: It is his honour to side with the weakest, and bear up those whom he sees run down.

2. He knew, and considered how long he had lain in this condition. Those that have been long in affliction, may comfort themselves with this that God keeps account how long, and knows our frame.

3. He asked him, *Wilt thou be made whole?* a strange question to be asked one that had been so long ill. Some indeed would not be made whole, because their sores serve them to beg by, and serve them for an excuse for idleness; but this poor man was as unable to go a begging, as to work, yet Christ put it to him, (1.) To express his own piety and concern for him. Christ is tenderly inquisitive concerning the desires of those that are in affliction, and is willing to know what is their petition; what shall I do for you? (2.) To try him whether he would be beholden to him for a cure, whom the great people were so prejudiced against, and sought to prejudice others. (3.) To teach him to value the mercy, and to excite in him desires after it. In spiritual cases, people are not willing to be cured of their sins, are loth to part with them. If this point therefore were but gained; if people were willing to be made whole, the work were half done, for Christ is willing to heal, if we be but willing to be healed, *Matt. viii. 3.*

4. The poor impotent man takes this occasion to renew his complaint, and to set forth the misery of his case, which makes his cure the more illustrious; *ver. 7.* Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool. He seems to take Christ's question as an imputation of carelessness and neglect; if thou hadst had a mind to be healed, thou wouldest have looked better to thy hits, and have got into the healing waters long before now; no, master, saith the poor man, it is not for want of a good will, but of a good friend, that I am unhealed: I have done what I could to help myself, but in vain, for no one else will help me.

(1.) He doth not think of any other way of being cured, but by these waters, and desires no other friendship, but to be helped into them; therefore when Christ cured him, his imagination or expectation could not contribute to it, for he thought of no such thing.

(2.) He complains for want of friends to help him in; *I have no man*, no friend to do me that kindness. One would think, some of those that had been themselves healed, should have lent him a hand, but it is common for the poor to be destitute of friends; *No man careth for their soul*. To the sick and impotent, it is as true a piece of charity to work for them, as to relieve them; and thus the poor are capable of being charitable to one another, and ought to be so, though we seldom find that they are so; I speak it to their shame.

(3.) He bewails his infelicity, that very often when he was coming, another stepped in before him: But a step between him and a cure, and yet he continues impotent. None had the charity to say, your case is worse than mine, do you go in now, and I will stay till the next time; for there is no getting over the old maxim, *Every one for himself*. Having been so often balked, he begins to despair, and now is Christ's time to come in to his relief; he delights to help in desperate cases. Observe, How mildly this man speaks of the unkindness of those about him, without any peevish reflexions; as we should be thankful for the least kindness, so we should be patient under the greatest contempts; and let our resentments be never so just, yet our expressions should ever be calm. And observe further to his praise, that though he had waited so long in vain, yet still he continued lying by the pool side, hoping that some time or other help would come, *Hab. ii. 3.*

5. Our Lord Jesus hereupon cures him with a word speaking, though he neither asked it, nor thought of it.

Here is, 1. The word he said, *ver. 8.* Rise, take up thy bed.

1. He is bidden to rise and walk; a strange command to be given to an impotent man, that had been long disabled; but this divine word was to be the vehicle of a divine power; it was a command to the disease to be gone, to nature to be strong, but it is expressed as a command to him to bestir himself. He must rise and walk, i. e. attempt to do it, and in the essay he should receive strength to do it. The conversion of a sinner is the cure of a chronical disease; this is ordinarily done by the word, a word



word of command, arise and walk; *turn and live*; *make ye a new heart*; which no more supposes a power in us to do it, without the grace of God, *distinguishing* grace, than this supposed such a power in the impotent man. But if he had not attempted to help himself, he had not been cured, and he must have *born the blame*; yet it doth not therefore follow, that when he did rise and walk, it was by his own strength; no, it was by the power of Christ, and he must *have all the glory*. Observe, Christ did not bid him rise and go into the waters, but *rise and walk*. Christ did that for us which the law could not do, and set that aside.

2. He is bidden to *take up his bed*. (1.) To make it to appear that it was a *perfect cure*, and purely miraculous, for he did not recover strength by degrees, from the extremity of weakness and impotency, he suddenly stepped into the highest degree of bodily strength; so that he was able to carry as great a load as any porter, that had been as long *used* to it as he had been *disused*: He, who this minute was not able to turn him in his bed, the next minute was able to carry his bed. The man sick of the palsy, *Matt. ix. 6.* was bidden to *go to his house*, but probably this man had no house to go to, the hospital was his home; therefore he is bidden to *arise and walk*. (2.) It was to *proclaim* the cure, and make it publick; for being the sabbath-day, whoever carried a burthen through the streets, made himself very remarkable, and every one would enquire what was the meaning of it; thereby the notice of the miracle would spread to the honour of God. (3.) Christ would thus witness against the tradition of the elders, which had stretched the law of the sabbath beyond its intention; and would likewise shew that he was *Lord of the sabbath*, and had power to make what alterations he pleased about it, and to over-rule the law. Joshua, and the host of Israel, marched about Jericho on the sabbath-day, when God commanded them; so did this man carry his bed in obedience to a command. The case may be such, that it may become a work of *necessity*, or *mercy*, to carry a bed on the sabbath-day; but here it was more, it was a work of *piety*, being designed purely for the glory of God. (4.) He would hereby try the faith and obedience of his patient. By carrying his bed publickly, he exposed himself to the censure of the ecclesiastical court, and was liable, at least, to be *scourged in the synagogue*. Now, will he run the venture of that in obedience to Christ? Yes, he will. Those that have been *healed by Christ's word*, should be *ruled by his word*, whatever it cost them.

2. The efficacy of this word, *ver. 9.* a divine power went along with it, and immediately he was *made whole*; *took up his bed, and walked*. (1.) He felt the power of Christ's word healing him, *immediately he was made whole*. What a joyful surprize was this to the poor cripple, to find himself, all of a sudden, so easy, so strong, so able to help himself; what a new world was he in in an instant. Nothing is too hard for Christ to do. (2.) He obeyed the power of Christ's word commanding him. He *took up his bed and walked*, and did not care who blamed him, or threatened him for it. The proof of our spiritual cure, is our rising and walking. Hath Christ healed our spiritual diseases, let us go whithersoever he sends us, and *take up* whatever he is pleased to lay upon us; and *walk before him*.

Fifthly, What came of the poor man after he was cured. We are here told,

1. What passed between him and the Jews, who saw him carry his bed on the sabbath-day; for on that day this cure was wrought, and it was the sabbath that fell within the passover week, and therefore a *high day*, *John xix. 31.* Christ's work was such, as that he needed not make any difference between sabbath-days, and other days, for he was always about his Father's business; but he wrought many remarkable cures on that day, perhaps to encourage his church, to expect those spiritual favours from him, in their observance of the Christian sabbath, which were typified by his miraculous cures. Now here,

1. The Jews quarrel with the man for carrying his bed on the sabbath-day, telling him *it was not lawful*, *ver. 10.* it doth not appear whether they were magistrates, who had power to *punish* him, or common people, who could only *inform* against him; but thus far was commendable, that while they knew not by *what authority* he did it, they were jealous for the honour of the sabbath, and could not unconcernedly see it *prophaned*; like Nehemiah, *chap. xiii. 17.*

2. The man justifies himself in what he did, by a warrant that would bear him out, *ver. 11.* I do not do it in contempt of the law and the sabbath, but in obedience to one, who, by *making me whole*, hath given an undeniable proof that he is greater than either. He that could work such a miracle, as to *make me whole*, no doubt might give me such a command, as to *carry my bed*; he that could over-rule the powers of nature, no doubt might over-rule a positive law, especially in an instance not of the essence of the law: He that was so kind as to make me whole, would not be so unkind as to bid me do what is sinful. Christ, by curing another paralytick, proved his power to *forgive sin*, here to *give law*; if his pardons are valid, his edicts are so, and his miracles prove both.

3. The Jews enquire further, who it was that gave him this warrant, *ver. 12.* *What man is that?* Observe, How industriously

they *over-looked* that which might be a ground of their *faith in Christ*. They enquire not, no, not for curiosity, who is that that *made thee whole*? While they industriously caught at that which might be a ground of reflexion upon Christ; *What man is that* which said unto thee, *take up thy bed*? They would fain *subpoena* the patient to be a witness against his physician, and to be his betrayer. In their question, observe, (1.) They resolve to look upon Christ as a *mere man*; *What man is that*? For though he gave never such convincing proofs of it, they were resolved they would never own him to be the *Son of God*. (2.) They resolve to look upon him as an *ill man*, and take it for granted that he who bid this man carry his bed, whatever divine commission he might *produce*, was certainly a delinquent, and as such they resolve to prosecute him. *What man is that* who durst give such orders?

4. The poor man was unable to give them any account of him, *ver. 13.* *He wist not who he was.*

1. Christ was *unknown* to him when he healed him. Probably he had heard of the name of Jesus, but had never seen him, and therefore would not tell that this was he. Note, Christ doth many a good turn for those that know him not, *Isa. xlv. 4, 5.* He enlightens, strengthens, quickens, comforts us, and we *wist not who it is*; nor are aware how much we receive daily by his mediation. This man being unacquainted with Christ, could not actually believe in him for a cure; but Christ knew the dispositions of his soul, and suited his favours to them, as to the blind man in a like case, *John ix. 36.* Our covenant and communion with God, takes rise, not so much from our knowledge of him, as from his knowledge of us. We *know God*, or rather, are *known of him*, *Gal. iv. 9.*

2. For the present he *kept himself unknown*; for as soon as he had wrought the cure, he *conveyed himself away*, he *made himself unknown*, so some read it; *a multitude being in that place*. This is mentioned to shew, either, (1.) *How* Christ conveyed himself away, by retiring into the crowd, so as not to be distinguished from a common person: He that was the chief of ten thousand, often made himself one of the throng. It is sometimes the lot of those who have by their services signalized themselves, to be levelled with the multitude, and overlooked. Or, (2.) *Why* he conveyed himself away; because there was *a multitude* there, and he industriously avoided both the *applause* of those who would admire the miracle, and *cry that up*, and the censure of those who would censure him as a sabbath-breaker, and *run him down*. Those that are active for God in their generation, must expect to pass by *evil report*, and *good report*; and it is wisdom, as much as may be, to keep out of the hearing of both; left by the one we be *exalted*, and by the other *depressed* above measure. Christ left the miracle to commend itself, and the man on whom it was wrought, to justify it.

2. What passed between him and our Lord Jesus at their next interview, *ver. 14.* Observe here,

1. Where Christ found him, *in the temple*, the place of worship, publick worship; in our attendance on publick worship we may expect to meet with Christ, and improve our acquaintance with him. Observe, (1.) Christ *went to the temple*; though he had many enemies, yet he appeared in publick, because there he bore his testimony to divine institutions, and had opportunity of doing good. (2.) The man that was cured *went to the temple*, there Christ found him, the same day, as it should seem, that he was healed; thither he straightway went. (1.) Because he had *by his infirmity* been so long *detained thence*; perhaps he had not been there of thirty-eight years, and therefore as soon as ever the embargo is taken off, his first visit shall be to the temple, as Hezekiah intimates his shall be, *Isa. xxxviii. 22.* *What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord*. (2.) Because he had, *by his recovery*, a good errand thither; he went up to the temple to return thanks to God for his recovery. When God has at any time restored us our health, we ought to attend him with solemn praises, *Psal. cxvi. 18, 19.* and the sooner the better, while the sense of the mercy is fresh. (3.) Because he had *by carrying his bed*, seemed to put a contempt upon the sabbath, he would thus shew that he had an honour for it, and made conscience of sabbath sanctification, in that on which the chief stress of it is laid, which is the *publick worship* of God; Works of necessity and mercy are allowed, but when they are over, we must *go to the temple*.

2. What he said to him. When Christ has cured us, he has not done with us, he now applies himself to the healing of his soul, and this *by the word* too.

1. He gives him a memorandum of his cure, *Behold thou art made whole*; he found himself made whole, yet Christ calls his attention to it. *Behold, consider* it seriously, how sudden, how strange, how cheap, how easy the cure was; *admire it*, behold and wonder; *remember it*, let the impressions of it abide, and never be lost, *Isa. xxxviii. 9.*

2. He gives him a caution against sin; in consideration hereof, *Being made whole, sin no more*. This implies, that his disease was the punishment of sin; whether of some remarkable flagrant sin, or only of sin in general, we cannot tell; but we know that sin is the procuring cause of sickness, *Psal. cvii. 17, 18.* Some observe that Christ did not make mention of sin to any



of his patients, but only to this *impotent* man, and to one other who was in like manner diseased, *Mark* ii. 5. While those chronic diseases lasted, they prevented the outward acts of many sins, and therefore now the disability was removed they had the more need to be watchful. Christ intimates to him, that those who are *made whole*, that are eased of the present sensible punishment of sin, are in danger of *returning* to sin, when the terror and restraint of that is over, unless divine grace dry up the fountain: When the trouble, which only dammed up the current, is over, the waters will return to their old course; and therefore there is need of great watchfulness, lest after healing mercy, we return again to folly. The *misery* we were *made whole from*, warns us to sin no more, having felt the smart of sin; the *mercy* we were *made whole by*, is an engagement upon us not to offend him who healed us. This is the voice of every providence, *Go, and sin no more*. This man began his new life very hopefully, *in the temple*, yet Christ saw it necessary to give him this caution; for it is common for people when they are sick, to *promise much*, when newly recovered, to *perform something*, but after a while to *forget all*.

3. He gives him warning of his danger, in case he should return to his former sinful course, *lest a worse thing come to thee*: Christ, who knows all mens hearts, knew that he was one of those that must be *frightened* from sin. Thirty-eight years lameness, one would think, was a thing ill enough, yet there is something *worse* that will come to him, if he relapse into sin after God has *given him such a deliverance* as this, *Ezr.* iv. 13, 14. The hospital where he lay was a melancholy place, but hell much more so: The doom of apostates is a worse thing than thirty-eight years lameness.

Now after this interview between Christ and his patient, observe in the two following verses.

1. The notice which the poor simple man gave to the Jews concerning Christ, *ver.* 15. he told them it was Jesus that had *made him whole*. We have reason to think he intended this for the honour of Christ, and the benefit of the Jews, little thinking that he that had so much power and goodness could have *any* enemies; but those that wish well to Christ's kingdom, must have the *wisdom of the serpent*, lest they do more hurt than good with their zeal, and not cast pearls before swine.

2. The rage and enmity of the Jews against him. *Therefore did the rulers of the Jews persecute Jesus*. See, (1.) How absurd and unreasonable their enmity to Christ was. *Therefore*, because he had made a poor sick man well, and so eased the publick charge, upon which it is likely he had subsisted; *therefore* they persecuted him, because he did good in Israel. (2.) How bloody and cruel it was; they *sought to slay him*; nothing less than his blood, his life, would satisfy them. (3.) How it was varnished over with a colour of zeal for the honour of the sabbath, for this was the pretended crime, *Because he had done these things on the sabbath-day*; as if that circumstance were enough to vitiate the best and most divine actions, and to render him obnoxious, whose deeds were otherwise most meritorious. Thus hypocrites often cover their real enmity against the *power* of godliness, with a pretended zeal for the *form* of it.

17. ¶ But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 18. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. 19. Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. 20. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. 21. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto his Son: 23. That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24. Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25. Verily, verily I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming,

in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice; 29. And shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. 30. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

We have here Christ's discourse upon occasion of his being accused as a sabbath-breaker; and it seems to be his vindication of himself before the Sanhedrin, when he was arraigned before them; whether on the same day, or two or three days after, doth not appear; probably the same day. Observe;

1. The doctrine laid down, by which he justified what he did on the sabbath-day, *ver.* 17. *He answered them*. This supposeth that he had something laid to his charge; or, what they suggested one to another, when they sought to slay him, *ver.* 16. He *knew*, and gave this reply to, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*. At other times, in answer to the like charge, he had pleaded the example of David, eating the shew-bread, of the priests slaying the sacrifices, and of the peoples watering their cattle on the sabbath-day; but here he goes higher, and alledgeth the example of his Father, and his divine authority; waving all other pleas, he insists upon that which was *inftar omnium*, and abides by it, which he had mentioned, *Matt.* xii. 8. *The Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day*; but he here enlarges on it.

1. He pleads that he was the *Son of God*, plainly intimated in his calling *God his Father*; and if so, his Holiness was *unquestionable*, and his sovereignty *incontestable*, and he might make what alterations he pleased of the divine law. *Surely they will reverence the Son*, the heir of all things.

2. That he was a worker together with God.

(1.) *My Father worketh hitherto*. The example of God's resting on the seventh day from all his work, is in the fourth commandment, made the ground of our observing it as a *sabbath*, or *day of rest*. Now God rested only from such work as he had done the six days before, otherwise he *worketh hitherto*; he is every day working, sabbath-days, and week-days; upholding and governing all the creatures, and concurring by his common providence to all the motions and operations of nature, *to his own glory*; therefore, when we are appointed to rest on the sabbath-day, yet we are not restrained from doing that which has a direct tendency *to the glory of God*; as the man's carrying his bed had.

(2.) *I work*; not only therefore I *may* work, *like him*, in doing good on sabbath-days, as well as other days, but I also *work with him*. As God created all things by Christ, so he supports and governs all by him, *Heb.* i. 3. This sets what he doth above all exception; he that is so great a worker, must needs be an uncontrollable governour; he that doth all is Lord of all, and therefore *Lord of the sabbath*; which particular branch of his authority he would now assert, because he was shortly to shew it further, in the change of the day from the seventh to the first.

2. The offence that was taken at his doctrine, *ver.* 18. *The Jews sought the more to kill him*. His defence was made his offence, as if by justifying himself he had made ill worse. Note, Those that will not be enlightened by the word of Christ, will be enraged and exasperated by it; and nothing more vexeth the enemies of Christ, than his asserting his authority, see *Psal.* ii. 3, 4, 5. They sought to kill him,

(1.) Because he had broken the sabbath, for let him say what he would in his own justification, they are resolved, right or wrong, to *find him guilty* of sabbath-breaking. When malice and envy sit upon the bench, reason and justice may e'en be silent at the bar, for whatever they can say will undoubtedly be over-ruled.

(2.) Not only so, but he had said also, *That God was his Father*. Now they pretend a jealousy for *God's honour*, as before for the sabbath-day, and charge Christ with it as a heinous crime, that he made himself equal with God; and a heinous crime it had been, if he had not really been so. It was the sin of Lucifer, *I will be like the most High*. Now,

(1.) This was justly inferred from what he said; that he was the *Son of God*, and that God was *his Father*, *πατήρ ἐγὼ εἶμι*, *his own Father*; his so as he was no one's else. He had said that he worked with his Father, by the same authority and power, and hereby he made himself equal with God. *Ecce intelligunt Judæi, quod non intelligunt Ariani*.

(2.) Yet it was unjustly imputed to him as an offence, that he equalled himself with God, for he was, and is God equal with the Father, *Phil.* ii. 6. and therefore Christ, in answer to this charge, doth not except against the innuendo as strained or forced, but makes out his claim, and proves that he is equal with God, in power and glory.

3. Christ's discourse upon this occasion, which continues without interruption to the end of the chapter; in these verses he explains, and afterwards confirms his commission, as mediator, and plenipotentiary in the treaty between God and man. And as the



the honours he is hereby *entitled to*, are such as it is not fit for any creature to receive, so the work he is hereby intrusted with, is such, as it is not possible for any creature to go through with, and therefore he is God equal with the Father.

1. In general, He is one with the Father in all he doth as mediator, and there was a perfect good understanding between them in the whole matter. It is ushered in with a solemn preface, *ver. 19. Verily, verily I say unto you; I the amen, the amen say it.* This speaks what is said to be, (1.) Very awful and great, and such as commands the most serious attention. (2.) Very sure, and such as commands an unfeigned assent. (3.) It intimates, that they are matters purely of divine revelation; things which Christ has told us, and which we could not otherwise have come to the knowledge of. Two things he saith in general, concerning the Son's oneness with the Father in working.

1. That the Son conforms to the Father; *ver. 19. The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do, for these things doth the Son.* The Lord Jesus as mediator, is, (1.) Obedient to his Father's will; so entirely obedient, that he can do nothing of himself, in the same sense as it is said *God cannot lye, cannot deny himself*, which speaks the perfection of his truth, not any imperfection in his strength; so here, Christ was so entirely devoted to his Father's will, that it was impossible for him in any thing to act separately. (2.) He is *observant of his Father's counsel*; he can, he will, do nothing but what he sees the Father do. No man can find out the work of God, but the only begotten Son, who lay in his bosom, sees what he doth, and is intimately acquainted with his purposes, and has the plan of them ever before him. What he did as Mediator throughout his whole undertaking, was the exact transcript or counterpart of what the Father did; that is, what he designed when he formed the plan of our redemption in his eternal counsels, and settled those measures in every thing which never could be broke, nor ever needed to be altered; it was the copy of that great original; it was Christ's faithfulness, as it was Moses's, that he did all according to the pattern shewed him in the mount. This is expressed in the present tense, what he sees the Father do, for the same reason, that when he was here upon earth, it was said he is in heaven, *Joh. iii. 13.* and is in the bosom of the Father, *Joh. i. 18.* as he was even then by his divine nature present in heaven, so the things done in heaven were present to his knowledge. What the Father did in his counsels, the Son had ever in his view, and still he had his eye upon it, as David in spirit spake of him, *I have set the Lord always before me, Psal. xvi. 8.* (3.) Yet he is equal with the Father in working, for what things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise; he did the same things, not such things, but ταῦτα, the same things; and he did them in the same manner, ὁμοίως, likewise with the same authority and liberty, and wisdom, the same energy and efficacy: Doth the Father enact, repeal, and alter positive laws? Doth he over-rule the course of nature, know mens hearts? So doth the Son. The power of the mediator is a divine power.

2. That the Father communicates to the Son, *ver. 20.* Observe, 1. The inducement to it, *the Father loveth the Son*; he declared, *this is my beloved Son.* He had not only a good will to the undertaking, but an infinite complacency in the undertaker. Christ was now hated of men, one whom the nation abhorred, *Isa. xlix. 7.* but he comforted himself with this, that his Father loved him. 2. The instances of it. He sheweth it,

1. In what he doth communicate to him; *he sheweth him all things that himself doth.* The Father's measures in making and ruling the world are shewed to the Son, that he may take the same measures in framing and governing the church, which work was to be a duplicate of the work of creation and providence, and is therefore called *the world to come.* He sheweth him all things *ἀ δὲ πάντα ὅσα ἐγὼ ποιῶ, ἃ ἡμεῖς ποιοῦμεν, ἃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ, ἃ ἡμεῖς ποιοῦμεν*, which he doth, i. e. which the Son doth, so it might be construed; all that the Son doth is by direction from the Father; he shews him,

2. In what he will communicate; he will shew him, i. e. will appoint and direct him to do greater works than these. (1.) Works of greater power than the curing of the impotent man, for he should raise the dead, and should himself rise from the dead. By the power of nature, with the use of means, a disease may possibly in time be cured, but nature can never, by the use of any means, in any time raise the dead. (2.) Works of greater authority than warranting the man to carry his bed on the sabbath-day. They thought that a daring attempt, but what was that to his abrogating the whole ceremonial law, and instituting new ordinances, which he would shortly do; *that ye may marvel.* Now they looked upon his works with contempt and indignation, but he will shortly do that which they will look upon with amazement, *Luke vii. 16.* Many are brought to marvel at Christ's works, whereby he has the honour of them, that are not brought to believe, by which they would have the benefit of them.

2. In particular; he proves his equality with the Father, by instancing in some of those works which he doth, that are the peculiar works of God. This is enlarged upon, *ver. 21—30.* (1.) He doth, and shall do that which is the peculiar work of

God's almighty power, *raising the dead, and giving life, ver. 21, 25, 26, 28.* (2.) He doth, and shall do, that which is the peculiar work of God's sovereign dominion and jurisdiction, *judging, and executing judgment, ver. 22, 23, 24, 27.* These two are interwoven, as being nearly connected; and what is said once, is repeated and inculcated; put both together, and they will prove that Christ said not amiss when he made himself equal with God.

First, Observe what is here said concerning the Mediator's power, to raise the dead, and give life. See,

1. His authority to do it, *ver. 21. As the Father raiseth up the dead, so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

(1.) It is God's prerogative to raise the dead, and give life, even his who first breathed into man the breath of life, and so made him a living soul; see *Deut. xxxii. 30. 1 Sam. ii. 6. Psal. lxviii. 20. Rom. iv. 17.* This God had done by the prophets Elijah, and Elisha, and it was a confirmation of their mission. A resurrection from the dead never lay in the common road of nature, nor ever fell within the thought of those that studied only the compass of nature's power, one of whose received axioms, was point blank against it; *à privatione ad habitum non datur regressus*, it was therefore ridiculed at Athens as an absurd thing, *Acts xvii. 32.* It is purely the work of a divine power, and the knowledge of it purely by divine revelation. This the Jews would own.

(2.) The Mediator is invested with this prerogative; *He quickeneth whom he will*; raiseth whom he will to life, and when he pleases. He doth not enliven things by natural necessity, as the sun doth, whose beams revive of course, but he acts as a free agent, has the dispensing of his power in his own hand, and is never either constrained, or restrained in the use of it. As he has the power, so he has the wisdom and sovereignty of a God; has the keys of the grave, and of death, *Rev. i. 18.* not as a servant, to open and shut, as he is bidden, for he has it as the key of David, which he is master of, *Rev. iii. 7.* An absolute prince is described by this, *Dan. v. 19.* whom he would he slew, or kept alive; it is true of Christ without an hyperbole.

2. His ability to do it. Therefore he has power to quicken whom he will as the Father doth, because he hath life in himself, as the Father has, *ver. 26.*

(1.) It is certain the Father has life in himself. Not only he is a self-existent being, who doth not derive from, or depend upon, any other, *Exod. iii. 14.* but he is a sovereign giver of life; he has the disposal of life in himself, and of all good, for so life sometimes signifies; it is all derived from him, and dependent on him; he is to his creatures the fountain of life, and all good; author of their being, and well being; the living God, and the God of all living.

(2.) It is as certain, that he hath given to the Son to have life in himself. As the Father is the original of all natural life and good, being the great Creator, so the Son, as Redeemer, is the original of all spiritual life and good; is that to the church, that the Father is to the world; see *1 Cor. viii. 6. Col. i. 19.* The kingdom of grace, and all the life in that kingdom, is as fully and absolutely in the hand of the Redeemer, as the kingdom of providence is in the hand of the Creator; and as God, who gives being to all things, has his being of himself, so Christ, who gives life, raised himself to life, by his own power, *Joh. x. 18.*

3. His acting according to this authority and ability. Having life in himself, and being authorized to quicken whom he will, by virtue hereof there are accordingly two resurrections performed by his powerful word; both which are here spoken of.

1. A resurrection that now is, *ver. 29.* a resurrection from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, by the power of Christ's grace. *The hour is coming, and now is.* It is a resurrection begun already, and further to be carried on; *When the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.* This is plainly distinguished from that, *ver. 28.* which speaks of the resurrection at the end of time. This saith nothing, as that doth of the dead in their graves, and of all them, and their coming forth. Now, (1.) Some think this was fulfilled in those whom he miraculously raised to life, Jairus's daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus; and it is observable, that all that Christ raised, were spoken to, as, *damsel, arise; young man, arise; Lazarus, come forth*; whereas, those raised under the Old Testament, were raised not by a word, but other applications, *1 Kings xvii. 21. 2 Kings iv. 34—xii. 21.* Some understand it of those saints that rose with Christ, but we do not read of the voice of the Son of God calling them. But, (2.) I rather understand it of the power of the doctrine of Christ, for the recovering and quickening of those that were dead in trespasses and sins, *Eph. i. 5, 6.* The hour was coming, when dead souls should be made alive by the preaching of the gospel, and a spirit of life from God accompanying it; nay, it then was while Christ was upon earth. It may refer especially to the calling of the Gentiles, which is said to be as life from the dead, and, some think, was prefigured by Ezekiel's vision, *chap. xxxvii. 1.* and foretold, *Isa. xxvi. 19. Thy dead men shall live.* But it is to be applied to all the wonderful success of the gospel, both among Jews



Jews and Gentiles; an hour which still is, and is still coming, till all the elect be effectually called. Note, 1. Sinners are spiritually dead, destitute of spiritual life, sense, strength, and motion, dead to God, miserable, but neither sensible of their misery, nor able to help themselves out of it. 2. The conversion of a soul to God is its resurrection from death to life; then it begins to live, when it begins to *live to God*, to breathe after him, and move towards him. 3. It is by the *voice of the Son of God*, that souls are raised to spiritual life; it is wrought by his power, and that power conveyed and communicated by his word; *the dead shall hear*, shall be made to hear, to understand, receive and believe the *voice of the Son of God*; to hear it as his voice, then the Spirit by it gives life, otherwise the *letter kills*. 4. The voice of Christ must be heard by us, that we may live by it. They that hear and attend to what they hear shall live. *Hear, and your soul shall live*, Isa. lv. 3.

2. A resurrection yet to come; this is spoken of, ver. 28, 29. introduced with, *marvel not at this*, which I have said of the first resurrection, do not reject it as incredible and absurd, for at the end of time you shall all see a more sensible and amazing proof of the power and authority of the Son of man. As *his own* resurrection was reserved to be the final and concluding proof of his personal commission, so the resurrection of *all men*, is reserved to be a like proof of his commission to be executed by his Spirit. Now observe here,

1. When this resurrection shall be; *the hour is coming*; it is fixed to an hour, so very punctual is this great appointment. The judgment is not adjourned, *sine die*, to some time, not yet pitched upon, no, *he hath appointed a day*. *The hour is coming*. (1.) It is not yet come, it is not the hour spoken of at ver. 25. that is coming, and now is. Those erred dangerously who said the resurrection was passed already, 2 Tim. ii. 18. But, (2.) It will certainly come, it is coming on, nearer every day than other; it is at the door. How far off it is, we know not, but we know that it is infallibly designed, and unalterably determined.

2. Who shall be raised; *all that are in the graves*, all that have died from the beginning of time, and all that shall die to the end of time. It was said, Dan. xii. 2. many shall arise; Christ here tells us those many shall be all: All must appear before the Judge, and therefore all must be raised; every person, and the whole of every person; every soul shall return to its body, and every bone to its bone. The grave is the prison of dead bodies where they are detained; their furnace, where they are consumed, (Job xxiv. 19.) yet in prospect of their resurrection we may call it their bed, where they sleep to be awaked again; their treasury, where they are laid up to be used again. Those that are not put into graves yet shall arise; but because most are put into graves, Christ useth this expression, *all that are in the graves*. The Jews used the word *sheol*, for the grave, which signifies the state of the dead; all that are in that state shall hear.

3. How they shall be raised. Two things are here told us.

1. The efficient of this resurrection; they shall hear his voice, i. e. he shall cause them to hear it, as Lazarus was made to hear that word, *come forth*; a divine power shall go along with the voice, to put life into them; and enable them to obey it. When Christ rose there was no voice heard, not a word spoken, because he rose by his own power; but at the resurrection of the children of men, we find three voices spoken of, 1 Thes. iv. 16. The Lord shall descend with a shout, the shout of a king, with the voice of the archangel; either Christ himself, the prince of the angels, or, the commander in chief under him, of the heavenly hosts; and with the trumpet of God: The soldier's trumpet sounding the alarm of war, the judge's trumpet publishing the summons to the court.

2. The effect of it; they shall come forth out of their graves, as prisoners out of their prison-house; they shall arise out of the dust, and shake themselves from it; see Isa. lii. 1, 2, 11. But that is not all, they shall appear before Christ's tribunal; shall come forth as those that are to be tried, come forth to the bar, publicly to receive their doom.

4. To what they shall be raised; to a different state of happiness or misery, according to their different character; to a state of retribution, according to what they did in the state of probation.

1. They that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life; they shall live again to live for ever. Note, 1. Whatever name men are called by, or whatever plausible profession they make, it will be well in the great day with those only that have done good, have done that which is pleasing to God, and profitable to others. 2. The resurrection of the body will be a resurrection of life to all those, and those only, that have been sincere and constant in doing good. They shall not only be publicly acquitted; as a pardoned criminal, we say, has his life, but they shall be admitted into the presence of God, and that is life, it is better than life; they shall be attended with comforts in perfection. To live is to be happy, and they shall be advanced above the fear of death; that is life indeed, in which mortality is for ever swallowed up.

2. They that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation; they shall live again to be for ever dying. The Pharisees thought the resurrection pertained only to the just, but Christ here rectifies No. xciv.

that mistake. Note, 1. *Evil doers*, whatever they pretend, will be treated in the day of judgment as *evil men*. 2. The resurrection will be to evil doers, that did not; by repentance, undo what they had done amiss, a resurrection of damnation. They shall come forth to be publicly convicted of rebellion against God, and publicly condemned to everlasting punishment; to be sentenced to it, and immediately sent to it without reprieve: Such will the resurrection be.

Secondly, Observe what is here said concerning the Mediator's authority to execute judgment, ver. 22, 23, 24, 27. As he hath an almighty power, so he has a sovereign jurisdiction; and who so fit to preside in the great affairs of the other life, as he who is the Father and fountain of life? Here is,

1. Christ's commission, or delegation to the office of a judge, which is twice spoken of here; ver. 22. *He hath committed all judgment to the Son*; and again, ver. 27. *Hath given him authority*.

(1.) The Father judgeth no man; not that the Father has resigned the government, but he is pleased to govern by Jesus Christ; so that man is not under the terror of dealing with God immediately, but hath the comfort of access to him by a Mediator. The Father judgeth no man, i. e. (1.) He doth not rule us by the mere right of creation, but by covenant, and upon certain terms, settled by a Mediator. Having made us, he may do what he pleaseth with us, as the potter with the clay; but he doth not do so, he draws us with the cords of a man. (2.) He doth not determine our everlasting condition by the covenant of innocency, nor take the advantage he has against us, for the violation of that covenant the Mediator having undertaken to make a vicarious satisfaction, upon which the matter is referred to him, and God is willing to enter upon a new treaty: Not under the law of the Creator, but the grace of the Redeemer.

(2.) He hath committed all judgment to the Son, hath constituted him Lord of all, Acts x. 36. Rom. xiv. 9. as Joseph in Egypt, Gen. xli. 40. This was prophesied of, Psal. lxxii. 1. Isa. xi. 3, 4. Jer. xxiii. 5. Mic. v. 1—4. Psal. lxxvii. 4.—xcvi. 13.—xcviii. 9. All judgment is committed to our Lord Jesus; for, (1.) He is entrusted with the administration of the providential kingdom, is head over all things. Eph. i. 20. Head of every man, 1 Cor. xi. 3. All things consist by him, Col. i. 17. (2.) He is empowered to make laws, immediately to bind conscience. I say unto you, is now the form in which the statutes of the kingdom of heaven run; be it enacted by the Lord Jesus, and by his authority. All the acts now in force are touched with his scepter. (3.) He is authorized to appoint and settle the terms of the new covenant, and to draw up the articles of peace between God and man; it is God in Christ that reconciles the world, and to him he has given power to confer eternal life. The book of life is the Lamb's book; by his award we must stand or fall. (4.) He is commissioned to carry on, and complete the war with the powers of darkness; to cast out, and give judgment against the prince of this world, John xii. 31. He is commissioned, not only to judge, but to make war, Rev. xix. 12. All that will fight for God against Satan, must lift themselves under his banner. (5.) He is constituted sole manager of the judgment of the great day. The ancients generally understood these words of that crowning act of his judicial power. The final and universal judgment is committed to the Son of man, the tribunal is his, it is the judgment seat of Christ; the retinue is his, his mighty angels; he will try the causes, and pass the sentence, Acts xvii. 31.

(3.) He hath given him authority to execute judgment also, ver. 27. Observe, (1.) What the authority is which our Redeemer is invested with; an authority to execute judgment; he has not only a legislative and judicial power, but an executive power too. The phrase here is used particularly for the judgment of condemnation, Jude 15. ποιῆσαι κρίσιν, to execute judgment upon all; the same with his taking vengeance, 2 Thes. i. 8. The ruin of impenitent sinners comes from the hand of Christ; he that executes judgment upon them, is the same that would have wrought salvation for them, which makes the sentence unexceptionable; and there is no relief against the sentence of the Redeemer; salvation itself cannot save those whom the Saviour condemns, which makes the ruin remediless. (2.) Whence he has that authority; the Father gave it him. Christ's authority as Mediator is delegated and derived; he acts as the Father's viceroy, as the Lord's anointed, the Lord's Christ.

Now all this redounds very much to the honour of Christ, acquitting him from the guilt of blasphemy, in making himself equal with God; and very much to the comfort of all believers, who may with the greatest assurance venture their all in such hands.

2. Here are the reasons (reasons of state) for which this commission was given him. He hath all judgment committed to him for two reasons.

(1.) Because he is the Son of man; which speaks these three things. (1.) His humiliation and gracious condescension. Man is a worm, the son of man a worm, yet this was the nature, this the character which the Redeemer assumed, in pursuance of the counsels of love; this low estate he stooped to, and submitted to all the mortifications attending it, because it was his



*Father's will*; in recompence therefore of this wonderful obedience God did thus dignify him: Because he condescended to be the *Son of man*, his Father made him *Lord of all*, Phil. ii. 8, 9. (2.) His affinity and alliance to us. The Father has committed the government of the children of men to him, because being the *Son of man*, he is of the same nature with those whom he is *set over*, and therefore the more unexceptionable, and the more acceptable as a judge. *Their government shall proceed from the midst of them*, Jer. xxx. 20. Of this that law was typical; *One of thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee*, Deut. xvii. 15. (3.) His being the Messiah promised. In that famous vision of his kingdom and glory, Dan. vii. 13, 14. he is called the *Son of man*; and, Psal. viii. 4, 5, 6. thou hast made the Son of man have *dominion over the works of thy hands*. He is the Messiah, and therefore is invested with all this power. The Jews usually called the Christ the *Son of David*; but Christ usually called himself the *Son of man*, which was the more humble title, and speaks him a Prince and Saviour, not to the Jewish nation only, but to the whole race of mankind.

(2.) *That all men should honour the Son*, ver. 23. The honouring of Jesus Christ is here spoken of, (1.) As God's great design. The Son intended to glorify the Father, and therefore the Father intended to glorify the Son, John xiii. 32. (2.) As man's great duty in compliance with that design. If God will have the Son honoured, it is the duty of all those to honour him to whom he is made known. Observe here,

1. The *dignity* that is to be done to our Lord Jesus. We must *honour the Son*, must look upon him as one that is to be *honoured*, both upon the account of his transcendent excellencies and perfections in himself, and the relations he stands in to us, and must study to give him honour accordingly; must *confess that he is Lord*, and worship him; must honour him who was dishonoured for us.

2. The degree of it; *even as they honour the Father*. This *supposeth* it our duty to *honour the Father*, for revealed religion is founded on natural religion, and *directs* us to *honour the Son*, to honour him with *divine honour*; we must honour the Redeemer with the same honour that we honour the Creator with. So far was it from blasphemy, that he made himself *equal with God*, that it is the highest injury that can be for us to make him *otherwise*. The *truths* and laws of the Christian religion, as far as they are revealed, are as sacred and honourable as those of natural religion, and to be equally had in estimation; for we lie under the same obligations to Christ, the author of our well being that we lie under to the author of our being; and have as necessary a dependence upon the Redeemer's grace, as upon the Creator's providence, which is a sufficient ground for this law, to *honour the Son as we honour the Father*.

To enforce this law, it is added, *He that honours not the Son honours not the Father* which hath sent him. Some pretend a reverence for the Creator, and speak *honourably* of him, who make light of their Redeemer, and speak *contemptibly* of him; but let such know, that the honours and interests of the Father and Son are so inseparably twisted and interwoven, that the Father never reckons himself *honoured* by any that *dishonour* the Son. Note, (1.) Indignities done to the Lord Jesus, reflect upon God himself, and will so be construed and reckoned for in the court of heaven: The Son having so far espoused the Father's honour, as to take to himself the *reproaches cast on him*, Rom. xv. 3. the Father doth no less espouse the Son's honour, and counts himself struck at through him. (2.) The reason of this is, because the Son is sent and commissioned by the Father; it is the *Father which hath sent him*. Affronts to an ambassador are justly repented by the prince that sends him. And by this rule, those who truly *honour the Son, honour the Father also*, see Phil. ii. 11.

3. Here is the rule by which the Son goes in executing this commission, so those words seem to come in, ver. 24. *He that heareth, and believeth, hath everlasting life*. Where we have the substance of the whole gospel; the preface commands *attention* to a thing most weighty, and *assent* to a thing most certain; *verily, verily I say unto you, I, to whom you hear all judgment is committed, I, in whose lips is a divine sentence; take from me the Christian's character, and charter*.

1. The *character* of a Christian; *He that heareth my word, and believes on him that sent me*. To be a Christian indeed is, (1.) To *hear the word of Christ*. It is not enough to be within hearing of it, but we must *attend on it*, as scholars on the instructions of their teachers; and *attend to it*, as servants to the commands of their masters; we must hear and obey it, must abide by the gospel of Christ as the fixed rule of our faith and practice. (2.) To *believe on him that sent him*, for Christ's design is to *bring us to God*; and as he is the first original of all grace, so he is the last object of all faith. Christ is our *way*, God is our *rest*. We must believe on God as *having sent Jesus Christ*, and recommended himself to our faith and love, by manifesting his glory in the face of *Jesus Christ*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. as *his Father, and our Father*.

2. The *charter* of a Christian, which all those are interested in that are Christians indeed. See what we get by Christ; 1. A charter of pardon, *He shall not come into condemnation*: The grace

of the gospel is a full discharge from the curse of the law. A believer shall not only not *lie under condemnation eternally*, but not *come into condemnation now*; not come into the danger of it, Rom. viii. 11. not *come into judgment*, not be so much as arraigned. 2. A charter of privileges; he is *passed out of death to life*, is invested in a present happiness in spiritual life; and entitled to a future happiness in eternal life. The tenor of the first covenant was, *Do this and live*, the man that doth them shall live in them. Now this proves Christ equal with the Father, that he has power to propose the *same benefit* to the *hearers of his word*, that had been proposed to the *keepers of the old law*, viz. *life*; *hear and live, believe and live*, is what we may venture our souls upon when we are disabled to *do and live*; see John xvii. 2.

4. Here is the righteousness of his proceedings pursuant to this commission, ver. 30. All judgment being committed to him, we cannot but ask *how he manageth it*. And here he answers, *My judgment is just*. All Christ's acts of government, both *legislative* and *judicial* are exactly agreeable to the rules of equity, see Prov. viii. 8. There can lie no exceptions against any of the determinations of the Redeemer; and therefore, as there shall be no *repeal* of any of his statutes, so there shall be no *appeal* from any of his sentences.

His judgments are certainly just, for they are directed,

1. By the Father's *wisdom*. *I can of my own self do nothing*, nothing without the Father, but *as I hear, I judge*, as he had said before, ver. 19. The Son *can do nothing but what he sees the Father do*; so here, nothing but what he hears the Father say; *As I hear, (1.) From the secret, eternal counsels of the Father, so I judge*. Would we know what we may depend upon in our dealing with God? *Hear the word of Christ*; we need not dive into the divine counsels, those *secret things*, which belong not to us, but attend to the revealed dictates of Christ's government and judgment, and those will furnish us with an unerring guide; for what Christ has adjudged, is an exact copy or counterpart of what the Father has decreed. (2.) From the published records of the Old Testament. Christ in all the execution of his undertaking had an eye to the scripture, and made it his business to conform to that, and *fulfil that*; *as it was written in the volume of the book*. Thus he taught us to do *nothing of ourselves*, but *as we hear from the word of God, so to judge of things, and act accordingly*.

2. By the Father's *will*. *My judgment is just*, and cannot be otherwise, *because I seek not mine own will, but his who sent me*. Not as if the will of Christ were contrary to the will of the Father, as the flesh contrary to the spirit in us. But, (1.) Christ had, as man, the natural and innocent affections of the human nature, *sense of pain*, and *pleasure*, an inclination to life, an aversion to death, yet he *pleased not himself*; did not confer with these, nor consult these, when he was to go on in his undertaking, but acquiesced entirely in the will of his Father. (2.) What he did as Mediator was not the result of any *peculiar, particular purpose and design* of his own; what he did *seek to do*, was not for his own mind's sake, but he was therein guided by his Father's will, and the purpose which he had *purposed to himself*. This our Saviour did upon all occasions *refer himself to*, and govern himself by.

Thus our Lord Jesus has opened his commission, (whether to the conviction of his enemies, or no) to his own honour, and the everlasting comfort of all his friends, who here see him *able to save to the uttermost*.

31. If I bear witness of my self, my witness is not true. 32. ¶ There is another that beareth witness of me, and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me, is true. 33. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34. But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. 36. ¶ But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. 37. And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath born witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. 38. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39. ¶ Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. 40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. 41. I receive not honour from men. 42. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. 44. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only? 45. Do not think that I will accuse you



you to the Father : there is *one* that accuseth you *even* Moses, in whom ye trust. 46. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me : for he wrote of me. 47. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words ?

In these verses our Lord Jesus proves and confirms the commission he had produced, and makes it out that he was sent of God, to be the Messiah.

1. He *sets aside* his own testimony of himself, *ver. 31. If I bear witness of my self*, though it is infallibly true, *John viii. 14.* yet according to the common rule of judgment among men, you will not admit it as *legal proof*, nor allow it to be *given in evidence*. Now, (1.) This *reflects reproach* upon the *sons of men*, and their veracity and integrity. Surely we may say deliberately, what David said in haste, *All men are liars*, else it would never have been such a received maxim, that a man's testimony of himself is suspicious, and not to be relied on ; it is a sign that self-love is stronger than the love of truth. And yet, (2.) It reflects honour on the Son of God, and speaks his wonderful condescension, that though he is the *faithful witness*, the truth itself, who may challenge to be credited *upon his honour*, and his own single testimony, yet is pleased to *wave his privilege*, and, for the confirmation of our faith, refers himself to his *vouchers*, that we might have full satisfaction.

2. He produceth other witnesses that bear testimony to him, that he was sent of God.

First, The Father himself bore testimony to him, *ver. 32. There is another that beareth witness*, which I take to be meant of God the Father, for Christ mentions *his* testimony with his own, *John viii. 18. I bear witness of my self, and the Father beareth witness of me.* Observe,

1. The seal which the Father put to his commission. He *beareth witness of me*, not only hath done so by a voice from heaven, but still doth so by the tokens of his presence with me. See who they are to whom God will bear witness. (1.) To those whom he *sends* and *employs* ; where he gives commissions, he gives credentials. (2.) To those who *bear witness* to him ; so Christ did. God will own and honour those that own and honour him. (3.) To those who decline *bearing witness of themselves* ; so Christ did. Those that humble and abase themselves, and seek not their own glory, God will take care they shall not *lose by it*.

2. The satisfaction Christ had in this testimony ; *I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.* I am very well assured that I have a divine mission, and do not in the least hesitate concerning it, thus he had the *witness in himself*. The devil tempted him to question his being the Son of God, but he never yielded.

Secondly, John Baptist witnesseth to Christ, *ver. 33, &c.* John came to *bear witness of the light*, chap. i. 7. his business was to prepare his way, and direct people to him ; *Behold the Lamb of God.* Now the testimony of John was, 1. A *solemn* and publick testimony ; ye sent an embassy of priests and Levites to John, which gave him an opportunity of publishing what he had to say ; it was not a popular, but a judicial testimony. 2. It was a *true* testimony ; *he bore witness to the truth*, as a witness ought to do ; the *whole truth*, and *nothing but the truth*. Christ doth not say, he *bore witness to me*, though every one knew he did, but, like an honest man, he *bore witness to the truth*. Now John was confessedly such a holy, good man, so mortified to the world, and so conversant with divine things, that it could not be imagined he should be guilty of such a forgery and imposture, as to say what he did concerning Christ if it had not been so, and if he had not been sure of it.

Two things are added concerning John's testimony.

1. That it was a testimony, *ex abundanti*, more than he needed to vouch ; *ver. 34. I receive not testimony from man.* Though Christ saw fit to quote John's testimony, it is with a protestation that it shall not be deemed or construed so as to prejudice the prerogative of his self-sufficiency. Christ needs no letters of commendation, no testimonials or certificates, but what his own worth and excellency brings with him, why then, did Christ here urge the testimony of John ? Why, *these things I say that ye might be saved.* This he aimed at in all this discourse, to save not his own life, but others souls ; he produced John's testimony, because being one of *themselves*, it was to be hoped they would hearken to it. Note, (1.) Christ desires, and designs the salvation, even of his enemies and persecutors. (2.) The word of Christ is the ordinary means of salvation. (3.) Christ in his word considers our infirmities, and condescends to our capacities ; consulting not so much what it befits so great a prince to say, as what we can bear, and what will be most likely to do us good.

2. That it was a testimony, *ad hominem*, because John Baptist was one whom *they* had a respect for ; *ver. 35. He was a light among you.* Observe,

1. The character of John Baptist, he was a *burning and a shining light*. Christ oft spoke honourably of John, he was now in prison, under a cloud, yet Christ gives him his *due praise*,

which we must be ready to do to all that faithfully serve God- (1.) He was a *light* not *phos*, *lux* ; so Christ was *the* light, but *lucerna*, a *luminary*, a *derived*, subordinate light. His office was to enlighten a dark world with notices of the Messiah's approach, to whom he was the *morning-star*. (2.) He was a *burning light*, which notes *sincerity* ; painted fire may be made to shine, but that which burns is true fire. It notes also his *activity*, zeal, and fervency, burning in love to God, and the souls of men ; fire is always working on itself, or something else, so is a good minister. (3.) He was a *shining light*, which notes either his *exemplary conversation*, in which our light shines, *Matt. v. 18.* Or, an *eminent*, diffusive influence. He was illustrious in the sight of others, though he affected obscurity, retirement, and was *in the deserts*, yet such was his doctrine, his baptism, his life, that he became very *remarkable*, and attracted the eyes of the nation.

2. The affections of the people to him, *Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.* (1.) It was a *transport* they were in upon the appearing of John ; *ye were willing*, *ἠδελύσασθε*, *ye delighted to rejoice in his light* ; you were very proud that you had such a man among you, that was the honour of your country ; *ye were willing*, *ἀγαλλιασθῆναι*, willing to *dance*, and make a noise about this light, as boys about a bonfire. (2.) It was but *transient*, and soon over ; *ye were fond of him*, *πρὸς ὧν*, *for an hour*, for a *season*, as little children are fond of a new thing, *ye were pleased with John* a while, but soon grew weary of him and his ministry, and said *he had a devil*, and now you have him in prison. Note, Many that seem to be affected and pleased with the gospel at first, afterwards despise and reject it ; it is common for forward and noisy professors to cool and fall off. These here rejoiced in John's light, but never walked in it, and therefore did not stick to it, like the stony ground. While Herod was a friend to John Baptist, the people caressed him, but when he fell under Herod's frowns he lost their favours. *Ye were willing* to countenance John, *πρὸς ὧν*, i. e. for *temporal ends*, so some take it ; you were glad of him in hopes to make a tool of him, by his interest, and under the umbrage of his name, to have shaken off the Roman yoke, and recovered the civil liberty and honour of your country. Now, (1.) Christ mentions their respects to John, to *condemn* them for their present opposition to him to whom John bore witness. If they had continued their veneration for John, as they ought to have done, they would have embraced Christ. (2.) He mentions the passing away of their respects, to justify God in depriving them, as he had now done, of John's ministry, and putting that light under a bushel.

Thirdly, Christ's own works witnessed to him ; *ver. 36. I have a testimony greater than that of John*, for if we believe the *witness of men*, sent of God, as John was ; the *witness of God* immediately, and not by the ministry of men, *is greater*, 1 John v. 9. Observe, Though the witness of John was a less *cogent*, and less *considerable* witness, yet our Lord was pleased to make use of it. We must be glad of all the supports that offer themselves for the confirmation of our faith, though they may not amount to a demonstration, and not *invalidate* any, under pretence there are others more *conclusive* ; we have occasion for them all.

Now this greater witness was the *works* which his Father had given him to *finish*. That is,

1. In general. The whole course of his life and ministry, his revealing God and his will to us, setting up his kingdom among men, reforming the world, destroying Satan's kingdom, restoring fallen man to his primitive purity and felicity, and shedding abroad in mens hearts the love of God, and one another. All that work, of which he said when he died, *It is finished*, it was all, from first to last, *opus Deo dignum* ; all he said and did was *holy* and *heavenly*, and a divine purity, power and grace shone in it, and proved abundantly that he was *sent of God*.

2. In particular. The miracles he wrought for the proof of his divine mission witnessed of him. Now it is here said, 1. That these works were *given him by the Father*, that is, he was both *appointed*, and *impowered* to work them, for, as Mediator, he *derived* both commission and strength from his Father. 2. They were given him to *finish* ; he must do all those works of wonder which the counsel and foreknowledge of God had before determined to be done ; and his finishing them proves a divine power, for as *for God his work is perfect*. 3. These works did *bear witness of him*, did prove that he was sent of God, and that what he said concerning himself was true ; see *Heb. ii. 4. Acts ii. 22.* That the Father had sent him, as a father, not as a master sends his servant on an errand, but as a father sends his son to take possession for himself ; if God had not sent him, he would not have *seconded* him, would not have *sealed* him, as he did by the works he gave him to do, for the world's Creator will never be its deceiver.

Fourthly, He produceth more fully than before his Father's testimony concerning him, *ver. 37. The Father that sent me hath born witness of me.* The prince doth not use to follow his ambassador himself to confirm his commission, *viva voce*, but God was pleased to bear witness of his Son himself, by a voice from heaven at his baptism, *Matt. iii. 17.* this is my ambassador, *This my beloved Son.* The Jews reckoned Bath-kôl, the *daughter of a voice*,



voice, a voice from heaven, one of the ways by which God made known his mind; in that way he had owned Christ publicly and solemnly, and repeated it, *Matt. xvii. 5.* Note, 1. Those whom God sends he will bear witness of; where he gives a commission he will not fail to seal it; he that never left himself without witness, (*Acts xiv. 17.*) will never leave any of his servants so, who go upon his errand. 2. Where God demands belief, he will not fail to give sufficient evidence, as he has done concerning Christ. That which was to be witnessed concerning Christ, was chiefly this, that the God we had offended, was willing to accept of him as mediator. Now concerning this, he has himself (and he was fittest to do it) given us full satisfaction, declaring himself well pleased in him, if we be so, the work is done.

Now it might be suggested, if God himself thus bore witness of Christ, how came it to pass that he was not universally received by the Jewish nation, and their rulers? To this Christ here answers, that it was not to be thought strange, nor their infidelity weaken his credibility, for two reasons.

1. Because they were not acquainted with such extraordinary revelations of God and his will. *Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape, or appearance.* They shewed themselves to be as ignorant of God, tho' they professed relation to him, as we are of a man we never either saw or heard. But what do I talk to you of God's bearing witness of me, he is one you know nothing of, nor have any acquaintance or communion with. Note, ignorance of God, is the true reason of men's rejecting the record he has given concerning his son. A right understanding of natural religion, would discover to us such admirable congruities in the Christian religion, as would greatly dispose our minds to the entertainment of it. Some give this sense of it, the Father bore witness of me by a voice, and the descent of a dove, which is such an extraordinary thing, that you never saw or heard the like; and yet for my sake there was such a voice and appearance; yea, and you might have heard that voice, you might have seen that appearance as others did, if you had closely attended the ministry of John, but by slighting it you missed of that testimony.

2. Because they were not affected, no not with the ordinary ways by which God had revealed himself to them; *ver. 38. Ye have not his word abiding in you.* They had the scriptures of the Old Testament, might they not by them be disposed to receive Christ? Yes, if they had had their due influence upon them. But, (1.) The word of God was not in them; it was among them, in their country, in their hands, but not in them, in their hearts; not ruling in their souls, but only shining in their eyes, and sounding in their ears. What did it avail them that they had the oracles of God committed to them, *Rom. iii. 2.* when they had not these oracles commanding in them? If they had, they would readily have embraced Christ. (2.) It did not abide. Many have the word of God coming into them, and making some impressions for a while, but it doth not abide with them, it is not constantly in them, as a man at home, but only now and then as a wayfaring man. If the word abide in us, if we converse with it by frequent meditation, consult with it upon every occasion, and conform to it in our conversation, we shall then readily receive the witness of the Father concerning Christ, see *John vii. 17.*

But how did it appear, that they had not the word of God abiding in them? It appeared by this, *whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.* There was so much said in the Old Testament concerning Christ, to direct people when, and where to look for him, and so to facilitate the discovery of him, that if they had duly considered those things, they could not have avoided the conviction of Christ's being sent of God; so that their not believing in Christ, was a certain sign that the word of God did not abide in them. Note, The indwelling of the word, and Spirit, and grace of God in us, is best tried by the effects of it, particularly by our receiving what he sends; the commands he sends, the messengers, the providences he sends, especially Christ, whom he hath sent.

Fifthly, The last witness he calls is the Old Testament, which witnessed of him, and to it he appeals, *ver. 39, &c. Search the scriptures, ἐρευνᾶτε*; it may be read, either, (1.) *Ye do search the scriptures*, and ye do well to do so; you read them daily in your synagogues, you have rabbies and doctors, and scribes, that make it their business to study them, and criticize upon them. The Jews boasted of the flourishing of scripture-learning in the days of Hillel, who died about twelve years after Christ's birth, and reckoned some of those who were then members of the Sanhedrin, the beauties of their wisdom, and the glories of their law; and Christ owns, that they did indeed search the scriptures, but it was in search of their own glory; *ye do search the scriptures*, and therefore if ye were not wilfully blind you would believe in me. Note, It is possible for men to be very studious in the letter of the scripture, and yet to be strangers to the power and influence of it. Or, (2.) As we read it, *search the scriptures*; and so, 1. It was spoken to them in the nature of an appeal; you profess to receive and believe the scriptures, there I will join issue with you, let that be the judge, provided you will not rest in the letter, (*hærerere in cortice*) but will search into it. Note, When appeals are made to the scriptures they must be searched. Search the whole book of scripture throughout, compare one passage with another, and explain one by another. We must likewise search particular passages

to the bottom, and see not what they seem to say *prima facie*, but what they say indeed. 2. It is spoken to us in the nature of an advice, or command to all Christians to search the scriptures. Note, All those who would find Christ, must search the scriptures; not only read them, and hear them, but search them. Which notes, (1.) Diligence in seeking, labour and study, and a close application of mind. (2.) Desire and design of finding. We must aim at some spiritual benefit and advantage in reading and studying the scripture, and often ask what am I now searching for? We must search as for hid treasures, *Prov. ii. 4.* as those that sink for gold or silver, or that dive for pearl, *Job xxviii. 1—11.* This ennobled the Bereans, *Acts xvii. 11.*

Now there are two things which we are here directed to have in our eye, in our searching of the scripture; heaven our end, and Christ our way.

1. We must search the scriptures for heaven as our great end; for in them ye think ye have eternal life. The scripture assures us of an eternal state set before us, and offers to us an eternal life in that state; it contains the chart that describes it, the charter that conveys it, the direction in the way that leads to it, and the foundation upon which the hope of it is built; and this is worth searching for, there where we are sure to find it. But to the Jews Christ saith only, ye think ye have eternal life in the scriptures; because, tho' they did retain the belief and hope of eternal life, and grounded their expectations of it upon the scriptures, yet herein they missed it, that they looked for it by the bare reading and studying of the scripture. It was a common, but corrupt saying among them, *he that has the words of the law has eternal life*; they thought they were sure of heaven, if they could say by heart, or rather by rote, such and such passages of scripture as they were directed to by the tradition of the elders; as they thought all the vulgar cursed, because they did not thus know the law, *John vii. 49.* so they concluded all the learned undoubtedly blessed.

2. We must search the scriptures for Christ, as the new and living way that leads to this end. Those are they, the great and principal witnesses that testify of me. Note, 1. The scriptures, even those of the Old Testament, testify of Christ, and by them God bears witness to him. The Spirit of Christ in the prophets testified before hand of him, *1 Pet. i. 11.* the purposes and promises of God concerning him, and the previous notices of him. The Jews knew very well that the Old Testament testified of the Messiah, and were critical in their remarks upon the passages that looked that way, and yet were careless, and wretchedly overseen in the application of them. 2. Therefore we must search the scriptures, and may hope to find eternal life in that search, because they testify of Christ, for this is life eternal to know him, see *1 John v. 11.* Christ is the treasure hid in the field of the scriptures; the water in those wells, the milk in those breasts.

To this testimony he annexeth a reproof of their infidelity and wickedness in four instances, particularly,

1. Their neglect of him and his doctrine, *ver. 40. Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.* You search the scriptures, you believe the prophets, which you cannot but see testify of me, and yet you will not come to me, to whom they direct you. Their estrangement from Christ was not so much the fault of their understandings, as of their wills. This is expressed as a complaint; Christ offered life, and it would not be accepted. Note, 1. There is life to be had with Jesus Christ for poor souls; we may have life, the life of pardon and grace, and comfort and glory: life is the perfection of our being, and inclusive of all happiness; and Christ is our life. 2. Those that would have this life, must come to Jesus Christ for it, we may have it for the coming for. It supposeth an assent of the understanding to the doctrine of Christ, and the record given concerning him; it lies in the consent of the will to his government and grace, and it produceth an answerable compliance in the affections and actions. 3. The only reason why sinners die, is because they will not come to Christ for life and happiness; it is not because they cannot, but because they will not. They will neither accept of the life offered, because spiritual and divine; nor will they agree to the terms on which it is offered, nor apply themselves to the use of the appointed means; they will not be cured, for they will not observe the methods of cure. 4. The wilfulness and obstinacy of sinners in rejecting the tenders of grace, is a great grief to the Lord Jesus, and what he complains of.

Those words, *ver. 41. I receive not honour from men*, come in in a parenthesis, to obviate an objection against him, as if he sought his own glory, and made himself the head of a party, in obliging all to come to him, and applaud him. Note, 1. He did not covet or court the applause of men; did not in the least affect that worldly pomp and splendour which the carnal Jews expected their Messiah to appear in. He charged those he cured not to make him known, and withdrew from those that would have made him king. 2. He had not the applause of men. Instead of receiving honour from men, he received a great deal of dishonour and disgrace from men, for he made himself of no reputation. 3. He needed not the applause of men, it was no addition to his glory, whom all the angels of God worship; nor was he any otherwise pleased with it, than as it was according to his Father's will,



will, and for the happiness of those, who in giving honour to him, received much greater honour from him.

2. Their want of the love of God, ver. 42. *I know you very well, that you have not the love of God in you.* Why should I wonder that you do not come to me, when you want even the first principle of natural religion, which is the love of God. Note, The reason why people slight Christ, is because they do not love God; for if we did indeed love God, we would love him who is his express image, and hasten to him by whom only we may be restored to the favour of God. He had charged them, ver. 37. with ignorance of God, and here with want of love to him; therefore men have not the love of God, because they desire not the knowledge of him.

Observe, (1.) The crime charged upon them, *You have not the love of God in you.* They pretended a great love to God, and thought they proved it by their zeal for the law, the temple, and the sabbath, and yet they were really without the love of God. Note, There are many who make a great profession of religion, that yet shew they want the love of God by their neglect of Christ, and their contempt of his commandments; they hate his holiness, and undervalue his goodness. Observe, It is the love of God in us, the love that is seated in the heart, and is a living, active principle there, that God will accept; the love shed abroad there, Rom. v. 5.

(2.) The proof of this charge, by the personal knowledge of Christ, who searcheth the heart, Rev. ii. 23. and knows what is in man; *I know you.* Christ sees through all our disguises, and can say to each of us, *I know thee.* 1. Christ knows men better than their neighbours know them. The people thought that the scribes and Pharisees were very devout and good men, but Christ knew they had nothing of the love of God in them. 2. Christ knows men better than they know themselves. These Jews had a very good opinion of themselves, but Christ knew how corrupt their inside was, notwithstanding the plausible shews of their outside; we may deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive him. 3. Christ knows men that do not, and will not know him; he looks on those who industriously look off him, and calls them by their own name, their true name, who have not known him.

3. Another crime charged upon them, is their readiness to entertain false christs, and false prophets, while they obstinately opposed him who was the true Messiah, ver. 43. *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.* Be astonished, O heavens, at this, Jer. ii. 12, 13. *for my people have committed two evils, great evils indeed.* (1.) They have forsaken the fountain of living waters, for they would not receive Christ, who came in his Father's name, had his commission from his Father, and did all for his glory. (2.) They have hewn out broken cisterns, they hearken to every one that will set up in his own name. They forsake their own mercies, that is bad enough, and it is for lying vanities, that is worse. Observe here, (1.) Those are false prophets who come in their own name, who run without being sent, and set up for themselves only. (2.) It is just with God to suffer those to be deceived with false prophets, who receive not the truth in the love of it, 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11. The errors of anti-christ are the just punishment of those who obey not the doctrine of Christ. They that shut their eyes against the true light, are by the judgment of God given up to wander endlessly after false lights, and to be led aside after every ignis fatuus. (3.) It is the gross folly of many, that while they nauseate ancient truths, they are fond of upstart errors; they loath manna, and at the same time feed upon ashes. After the Jews had rejected Christ and his gospel, they were continually haunted with spectres, with false christs, and false prophets, Matt. xxiv. 24. and their proneness to follow such, occasioned those distractions and seditions that hastened their ruin.

4. They are here charged with pride and vain-glory, and unbelief the effect of it, ver. 44. Having sharply reprov'd their unbelief, like a wise physician, he here searcheth into the cause, lays the ax to the root. They therefore slighted and undervalued Christ, because they admired and over-valued themselves. Here is,

1. Their ambition of worldly honour: Christ despised it, ver. 41. they set their hearts upon it; *Ye receive honour one of another,* i. e. ye look for a Messiah in outward pomp, and promise yourselves worldly honour by him. *You receive honour,* i. e. 1. You desire to receive it, and aim at that in all you do. 2. Ye give honour to others, and applaud them, only that they may return it, and may applaud you. *Petimus dabimusque vicissim.* It is the proud man's art to throw honour upon others, only that it may rebound upon himself. 3. You are very careful to keep all the honours to yourselves, and confine them to your own party, as if you had the monopoly of that which is honourable. 4. What respects are shewed you, you receive them yourselves, and do not transmit them to God, as Herod. Idolizing men and their sentiments, and affecting to be idolized by them, and their applauses, are pieces of idolatry, as directly contrary to Christianity as any other.

2. Their neglect of spiritual honour, called here *the honour that comes from God only*; this they sought not, nor minded. No. xciv.

Note, 1. True honour is that which comes from God only, that is real and lasting honour; those are honourable indeed whom he takes into covenant and communion with himself. 2. *This honour have all the saints.* All that believe in Christ, through him, receive the honour that comes from God: He is not partial, but will give glory wherever he gives grace. 3. This honour that comes from God, we must seek, must aim at it, and act for it, and take up with nothing short of it, Rom. ii. 1. we must account it *our reward*, as the Pharisees accounted the praise of men. 4. Those that will not come to Christ, and those that are ambitious of worldly honour, make it appear that they seek not the honour that comes from God, and it is their folly and ruin.

3. The influence this had upon their infidelity. *How can ye believe who are thus affected?* Observe here, (1.) The difficulty of believing ariseth from ourselves, and our own corruption; we make our work hard to ourselves, and then complain it is impracticable. (2.) The ambition and affectation of worldly honour is a great hindrance to faith in Christ. How can they believe, who make the praise and applause of men their idol? When the profession and practice of serious godliness is unfashionable, is *every where spoken against*; when Christ and his followers are men wondered at, and to be a Christian, is to be like a speckled bird, (and this is the common case) how can they believe, the top of whose ambition is to *make a fair shew in the flesh*?

Sixthly, The last witness here called is Moses, ver. 45, &c. The Jews had a great veneration for Moses, and valued themselves upon their being the disciples of Moses, and pretended to adhere to Moses in their opposition to Christ; but Christ here shews them,

1. That Moses was a witness against the unbelieving Jews, and accused them to the Father; *there is one that accuseth you, even Moses.* This may be understood, either, (1.) As shewing the difference between the law and the gospel. Moses, that is, the law, *accuseth you*, for by the law is the knowledge of sin; it condemns you, it is to those that trust to it a ministration of death and condemnation; but it is not the design of Christ's gospel to accuse us: *Think not that I will accuse you.* Christ did not come into the world as a *Momus*, to find fault, and pick quarrels with every body, or as a *spy* upon the actions of men, or a *promoter* to fish for crimes, no, he came to be an advocate, not an accuser, to reconcile God and man, and not to set them more at variance; what fools were they then that adhered to Moses against Christ, and desired to be under the law? Gal. iv. 21. Or, (2.) As shewing the manifest unreasonableness of their infidelity. Think not that I will appeal from your bar to God's, and challenge you to answer there for what you do against me, as injured innocency uses to do; no, I do not need, you are already accused, and cast in the court of heaven; Moses himself faith enough to convict you of, and condemn you for your unbelief. Let them not mistake concerning Christ, though he was a prophet, he did not improve his interest in heaven against those that persecuted him, did not as Elias, *make intercession against Israel*, Rom. xi. 2. or as Jeremiah, desire to see God's vengeance on them, Jer. xx. 12. Instead of accusing his crucifiers to his Father, he prayed, *Father, forgive them.* Nor let them mistake concerning Moses, as if he would stand by them in rejecting Christ; no, *There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.* Note, 1. External privileges and advantages are commonly the vain confidence of those who reject Christ and his grace. The Jews trusted in Moses, and thought their having his laws and ordinances would save them. 2. Those that confide in their privileges, and do not improve them, will find, not only that their confidence is disappointed, but that those very privileges will be witnesses against them.

2. That Moses was a witness for Christ, and to his doctrine, ver. 46, 47. *he wrote of me.* Moses did particularly prophesy of Christ, as the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Shiloh, the great prophet; the ceremonies of the law of Moses, were figures of him that was to come. The Jews made Moses the patron of their opposition to Christ, but Christ here shews them their error, that Moses was so far from writing against Christ, that he wrote for him, and of him. But,

1. Christ here charges it on the Jews, that they did not believe Moses. He had said, ver. 45. that they trusted in Moses, and yet here undertakes to make out that they did not believe Moses; they trusted to his name, but they did not receive his doctrine in its true sense and meaning; they did not rightly understand, nor give credit to what there was in the writings of Moses concerning the Messiah.

2. He proves this charge from their disbelief of him; *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me.* Note, 1. The surest trial of faith is by the effects it produceth; many say they believe, whose actions give their words the lye, for had they believed the scriptures, they would have done otherwise than they did. 2. Those who rightly believe one part of scripture, will receive every part. The prophecies of the Old Testament were so fully accomplished in Christ, that they who rejected Christ, did in effect deny those prophecies, and set them aside.



3. From their disbelief of Moses, he infers that it was not strange they rejected him. *If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?* How can it be thought ye should? (1.) If ye do not believe sacred writings, those oracles which are in black and white, which is the most certain way of conveyance, *how shall ye believe my words*, which use to be less regarded? (2.) If you do not believe Moses, for whom you have such a profound veneration, how is it likely you should believe me, whom you look upon with so much contempt? see *Exod. vi. 12.* (3.) If ye believe not what Moses spake and wrote of me, which is a strong and cogent testimony for me, how shall ye believe me and my mission? If we admit not the premisses, how shall we admit the conclusion? The truth of the Christian religion, it being a matter purely of divine revelation, depends upon the divine authority of the scripture; if therefore we believe not the divine inspiration of those writings, how shall we receive the doctrine of Christ?

Thus ends Christ's plea for himself, in answer to the charge exhibited against him; what effect it had we know not; it should seem to have had this, their *mouths* were stopped for the present, and they could not for shame but drop the prosecution, and yet their *hearts* were hardened.

## CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we have, (1.) The miracle of the loaves, ver. 1—14. (2.) Christ's walking upon the water, ver. 15—21. (3.) The peoples flocking after him to Capernaum, ver. 22—25. (4.) His conference with them, occasioned by the miracle of the loaves, in which he reproves them for seeking carnal food, and directs them to spiritual food, ver. 26, 27. shewing them how they must labour for spiritual food, ver. 28, 29. and what that spiritual food is, ver. 30—59. (5.) Their discontent at what he said, and the reproof he gave them for it, ver. 60—65. (6.) The apostasy of many from him, and his discourse with his disciples that adhered to him upon that occasion, ver. 66—71.

1. **A**FTER these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. 2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. 3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. 4. And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. 5. ¶ When Jesus then lift up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? 6. (And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do) 7. Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. 8. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peters brother, saith unto him, 9. There is a lad here, which hath five barley-loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many? 10. And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11. And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would. 12. When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. 13. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. 14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

We have here an account of Christ's feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes; which miracle is in this respect remarkable, that it is the only passage of the actions of Christ's life, that is recorded by all the four evangelists. John, who useth not to relate what had been recorded by those who wrote before him, yet relates this, because of the reference the following discourse has to it.

Observe, 1. The place and time, where and when this miracle was wrought, which are noted for the greater evidence of the truth of the story; it is not said that it was done once upon a time, no body knows where, but the circumstances are specified, that the fact might be enquired into.

1. The country that Christ was in, ver. 1. *He went over the sea of Galilee*, called elsewhere the lake of Gennesareth, here the *sea of Tiberias*, from a city adjoining, which Herod had lately enlarged and beautified, and called so in honour of Tiberius the emperor, and probably had made his metropolis. Christ did not go directly over, cross this inland sea, but made a *coasting* voyage to another place on the same side. It is not tempting God to chuse to go *by water*, when there is convenience for it, even to those places whither we might go *by land*; for Christ never tempted the Lord his God, Matt. iv. 7.

2. The company that he was attended with, *A great multitude followed him because they saw his miracles*, ver. 2. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus while he went about *doing good*, lived continually in a crowd, which gave him more trouble than honour. Good and useful men must not complain of a *hurry* of business when they are serving God and their generation; it will be time enough to *enjoy ourselves*, when we come to that world where we shall *enjoy God*. 2. Christ's miracles drew many *after him* that were not effectually drawn *to him*. They had their curiosity gratified by the strangeness of them, who had not their consciences convinced by the power of them.

3. Christ's posting himself advantageously to entertain them, ver. 3. *He went up into a mountain*, and there he sat with his disciples, that he might the more conveniently be seen, and heard by the multitude that crowded after him; this was a *natural* pulpit, and not like Ezra's, made *for the purpose*. Christ was now driven to be a *field-preacher*, but his word was never the worse, nor the less acceptable for that, to those who knew how to value it; who followed him still, not only when he went out to a desert place, but when he went up to a mountain, though up hill be against heart. He sat there, as teachers use to do in cathedra; he did not sit at ease, nor sit in state, yet sat as one having authority; sat ready to receive addresses that were made to him, whoever would, might come and find him there. He sat with his disciples, he condescended to take them to sit with him, to put a reputation upon them before the people, and give them an earnest of the glory in which they should shortly sit with him. We are said to sit with him, Eph. ii. 6.

4. The time when it was. The first words *after those things*, do not signify that this immediately followed what was related in the foregoing chapter, for it was a considerable time after, and they signify no more but in process of time; but we are told, ver. 4. that it was *when the passover was nigh*; which is here noted, (1.) Because, perhaps, that had brought in all the apostles from their respective expeditions, whither they were sent as itinerant preachers, that they might attend their Master to Jerusalem to keep the feast. (2.) Because it was a custom with the Jews, religiously to observe the approach of the passover *thirty days* before, with some sort of solemnity; so long before they had it in their eye, repaired the roads, mended bridges, if occasion were, and discoursed of the passover, and the institution of it. (3.) Because, perhaps, the approach of the passover, when every one knew Christ would go up to Jerusalem, and be absent for some time, made the multitude flock the more after him, and attend the more diligently on him. Note, The prospect of losing our opportunities, should quicken us to improve them with double diligence. And when solemn ordinances are approaching, it is good to prepare for them by conversing with the word of Christ.

2. The miracle itself. And there observe,

1. The notice Christ took of the crowd that attended him, ver. 5. He lift up his eyes, and saw a great company come to him, poor, mean, ordinary people no doubt, for such make up the multitudes, especially in such remote corners of the country, yet Christ shewed himself pleased with their attendance, and concerned for their welfare; to teach us to *condescend to them of low estate*, and not to set those with the dogs of our flock, whom Christ hath set with the lambs of his. The souls of the poor are as precious to Christ, and should be so to us, as those of the rich.

2. The enquiry he made concerning the way of providing for them. He directed himself to Philip, who had been his disciple from the first, and had seen all his miracles, and particularly that of his turning water into wine, and therefore it might be expected that he should have said, Lord, if thou wilt, it is easy to thee to feed them all; those that, like Israel, have been witnesses of Christ's works, and have shared in the benefit of them, are inexcusable if they say, *can he furnish a table in the wilderness?* Philip was of Bethsaida, in the neighbourhood of which town Christ now was, and therefore he was most likely to help them to provision at the best hand; and probably much of the company was known to him, and he concerned for them. Now Christ asked, *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?* (1.) He takes it for granted that they must all eat with him. One would think when he had taught and healed them, he had done his part; and now they should rather have been contriving how to treat him and his disciples, for some of the people, it is likely, were rich, and we are sure that Christ and his disciples were poor, yet he is solicitous to entertain them. Those that will accept Christ's spiritual gifts, instead of paying for them, shall be paid for their acceptance of them. Christ having fed their souls with



with the bread of life, feeds their bodies also with food convenient, to shew that the Lord is for the body, and to encourage us to pray for our daily bread; and to set us an example of compassion to the poor, *Jam. ii. 15.* (2.) His enquiry is, *Whence shall we buy bread?* One would think, considering his poverty, he should rather have asked, where shall we have money to buy for them? But he will rather lay out all he has than they shall want. He will buy to give, and we must labour, that we may give, *Eph. iv. 28.*

3. The design of this enquiry, it was only to try the faith of Philip, for he himself knew what he would do, *ver. 6.* Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus is never at a loss in his counsels, but how difficult soever the case is, he knows what he has to do, and what course he will take; *Acts xv. 18.* He knows the thoughts he has towards his people, *Jer. xxix. 11.* and is never at uncertainty, when we know not, he himself knows what he will do. 2. When Christ is pleased to puzzle his people, it is only with a design to prove them. The question put Philip to a nonplus, yet Christ proposed it to try whether he would say, Lord, if thou wilt exert thy power for them we need not buy bread.

4. Philip's answer to this question, *Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient*, *ver. 7.* Master, it is to no purpose to talk of buying bread for them, for neither will the country afford so much bread, nor can we afford to lay out so much money, ask Judas else, who carries the bag. Two hundred pence of their money, amounts to about six pounds of ours, and if they lay out all that at once, it will exhaust their fund, and break them, and they must starve themselves. Grotius computes, that two hundred pennyworth of bread would scarce reach to two thousand, but Philip would go as near hand as he could, will have every one to take a little; and nature, we say, is content with a little. See the weakness of Philip's faith, that in this strait, as if the master of the family had been an ordinary person, he looked for supply only in an ordinary way. Christ might now have said to him, as he did afterwards, *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* Or, as God to Moses, in a like case, *Is the Lord's hand waxen short?* We are apt thus to distrust God's power when visible and ordinary means fail, that is, to trust him no further than we can see him.

5. The information which Christ received from another of his disciples concerning the provision they had. It was Andrew, here said to be *Simon Peter's brother*; though he was senior to Peter in discipleship, and instrumental to bring Peter to Christ, yet Peter afterwards so far outshone him, that he is described by his relation to Peter: he acquainted Christ with what they had at hand; and in that we may see,

(1.) The strength of his love to those whom he saw his Master concerned for, in that he was willing to bring out all they had, though he knew not but they might want themselves, and any one would have said, *Charity begins at home.* He did not go about to conceal it, under pretence of being a better husband of their provision than the master was, but honestly gives in an account of all they had. There is a lad here, *παῖς δέσποτος*, a little lad, probably one that used to follow this company, as sutlers do the camp, with provisions to sell, and the disciples had bespoke what he had for themselves; and it was five barley-loaves, and two small fishes. Here, (1.) The provision was coarse and ordinary; they were barley-loaves. Canaan was a land of wheat, *Deut. viii. 8.* its inhabitants were commonly fed with the finest wheat, *Psal. lxxxi. 16.* the kidneys of wheat, *Deut. xxxii. 14.* yet Christ and his disciples were glad of barley-bread. It doth not follow, hence, that we should tie ourselves to such coarse fare, and place religion in it, when God brings that which is finer to our hands, let us receive it and be thankful; but it doth follow, that therefore we must not be desirous of dainties, *Prov. xxiii. 5.* nor murmur if we be reduced to coarse fare, but be content and thankful, and well reconciled to it; barley-bread is what Christ had, and better than we deserve: nor let us despise the mean provision of the poor, nor look upon it with contempt, remembering how Christ was provided for. (2.) It was but short and scanty; there were but five loaves, and those so small that one little lad carried them all; and we find, *2 Kings iv. 42, 43.* that twenty barley-loaves, with some other provision to help out, would not dine a hundred men without a miracle. There were but two fishes, and those small ones, *ὄψοι ὀλίγαι*, so small that one of them was but a morsel: *pisciculi affati*, I take the fish to be pickled or soured, for they had not fire to dress them with. The provision of bread was little, but that of fish was less, in proportion to it, so that many a bit of dry bread they must eat, before they could make a meal of this provision; but they were content with it. Bread is meat for our hunger, but they that murmured for flesh, it is said, they asked meat for their lusts, *Psal. lxxviii. 18.* Well, Andrew, was willing the people should have this as far as it would go. Note, A distrustful fear of wanting ourselves, should not hinder us from needful charity to others.

(2.) See here the weakness of his faith, in that word, *But what are they among so many?* To offer that to such a multitude is but to mock them. Philip and he had not that actual consideration of the power of Christ, which they had had such large experience of, as they should have had. Who fed the camp of Israel in the

wilderness? He that could make one man chase a thousand, could make one loaf feed a thousand.

6. The directions Christ gave the disciples to seat the guests, *ver. 10.* *Make the men sit down*, though ye have nothing to set before them, and trust me for that; this was like sending providence to market, and going to buy without money: Christ would thus try their obedience. Observe, 1. The furniture of the dining-room; there was much grass in that place, though a desert place; see how bountiful nature is, makes grass to grow upon the mountains, *Psal. cxlvii. 8.* This grass was uneaten; God gives not only enough, but more than enough. Here was this plenty of grass where Christ was preaching; the gospel brings other blessings along with it, *Then shall the earth yield her increase*, *Psal. lxxvii. 6.* This plenty of grass made the place the more commodious for them that must sit on the ground, and served them for cushions, or beds, (as they called what they sat on at meat, *Ezra. i. 6.*) and considering what Christ saith of the grass of the field, *Mat. vi. 29, 30.* these beds excelled those of Ahasuerus's: nature's pomp is the most glorious. 2. The number of the guests, about five thousand. A great entertainment, representing that of the gospel, which is a feast for all nations, *Isa. xxv. 6.* a feast for all comers.

7. The distribution of the provision, *ver. 11.* Observe, 1. It was done with thanksgiving, he gave thanks. Note, 1. We ought to give thanks to God for our food, for it is a mercy to have it, and we have it from the hand of God, and must receive it with thanksgiving, *1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.* And this is the sweetness of our creature-comforts, that they will furnish us with matter, and give us occasion for that excellent duty of thanksgiving. 2. Though our provision be coarse and scanty; though we have neither plenty nor dainty, yet we must give thanks to God for what we have.

2. It was distributed from the hand of Christ by the hands of his disciples, *ver. 11.* Note, 1. All our comforts come to us originally from the hand of Christ; whoever brings them, it is he that sends them, he distributes to them, who distribute to us. 2. In distributing the bread of life to those that follow him, he is pleased to make use of the ministration of his disciples; they are the servitors at Christ's table, or rather, rulers in his household, to give to every one their portion of meat in due season.

3. It was done to universal satisfaction. They did not every one take a little, but all had as much as they would; not a short allowance, but a full meal; and considering how long they had fasted, with what an appetite they sat down, how agreeable this miraculous food may be supposed to be above common food, it was not a little that served them, when they eat as much as they would, and on free cost. Those whom Christ feeds with the bread of life he doth not stint, *Psal. lxxxi. 10.* There were but two small fishes, and yet they had of them too as much as they would. He did not reserve them for the better sort of the guests, and put off the poor with dry bread, but treated them all alike, for they were all alike welcome. They who call feeding upon fish fasting, reproach the entertainment Christ here made, which was a full feast.

8. The care that was taken of the broken meat.

1. The orders Christ gave concerning it, *ver. 12.* *When they were filled*, and every man had within him a sensible witness to the truth of the miracle, Christ said to the disciples, the servants he employed, *Gather up the fragments.* Note, We must always take care that we make no waste of any of God's good creatures, for the grant we have of them, though large and full, is with this proviso, *wilful waste only excepted.* It is just with God to bring us to the want of that which we make waste of. The Jews were very careful not to lose any bread, or let it fall to the ground to be trodden upon. *Qui panem contemnit in gravem incidit paupertatem*, was a saying among them. Though Christ could command supplies whenever he pleased, yet he would have the fragments gathered up. When we are filled, we must remember that others want, and we may want. Those that would have wherewith to be charitable, must be provident. Had this broken meat been left upon the grass, the beasts and fowls would have gathered it up; but that which is fit to be meat for men is wasted and lost, if it be thrown to the brute creatures. Christ did not order the broken meat to be gathered up till all were filled; we must not begin to hoard and lay up till all is laid out that ought to be, for that is withholding more than is meet. Mr. Baxter notes here, "How much less should we lose God's word, or helps, or our time, or such greater mercies."

2. The observance of these orders, *ver. 13.* *They filled twelve baskets with the fragments*; which was an evidence, not only of the truth of the miracle, that they were fed, not with fancy, but with real food, witness those remains, but of the greatness of it; they were not only filled, but there was all this over and above; see how large the divine bounty is, it not only fills the cup, but makes it run over; bread enough, and to spare in our Father's house. The fragments filled twelve baskets, one for each disciple; they were thus repayed with interest for their willingness to part with what they had for publick service; see *2 Chron. xxxi. 10.* The Jews lay it as a law upon themselves, when they have eaten a meal, to be sure to leave a piece of bread upon the table,



table, upon which the blessing after meat may rest; for it is a curse upon the wicked man, *Job xx. 21.* That *there shall none of his meat be left.*

3. Here is the influence which this miracle had upon the people, who tasted of the benefit of it, *ver. 14.* they said, *This is of a truth that prophet.* Note, 1. Even the vulgar Jews, with great assurance expected the Messiah to come into the world, and to be a great prophet. They speak here with assurance of his coming. The Pharisees despised them as *not knowing the law*, but, it should seem, they knew more of him that is the *end of the law*, than they did. 2. The miracles which Christ wrought did clearly demonstrate that he was the Messiah promised, a teacher come from God, the great prophet, and could not but convince the amazed spectators, that this was he that should come. 3. There were many who were convinced he was that prophet which should come into the world, who, yet did not cordially receive his doctrine, for they did not continue in it. Such a wretched incoherence, and inconsistency there is between the faculties of the corrupt, un sanctified soul, that it is possible for men to acknowledge that Christ is that prophet, and yet turn a deaf ear to him.

15. ¶ When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone. 16. And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, 17. And entred into a ship, and went over the sea towards Capernaum: and it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. 18. And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew. 19. So when they had rowed about five and twenty, or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. 20. But he saith unto them, It is I, be not afraid. 21. Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

Here is, 1. Christ's retirement from the multitude.

1. Observe, What induced him to retire; because he perceived that they who acknowledged him to be that prophet that should come into the world, would come and *take him by force to make him a king*, *ver. 15.* Now here we have an instance,

(1.) Of the irregular zeal of some of Christ's followers, nothing would serve but they would make him a king.

Now, 1. This was an *act of zeal*, for the honour of Christ, and against the contempt which the ruling part of the Jewish church put upon him. They were concerned to see so great a benefactor to the world, so little esteemed of in it, and therefore, since royal titles are counted the most illustrious, they would make him a king, knowing that the Messiah was to be a king; and if a prophet like Moses, then a sovereign prince and lawgiver like him; and if they cannot set him up, *upon the holy hill of Zion*, a mountain in Galilee shall serve for the present. Those whom Christ has feasted with the royal dainties of heaven, should in return for his favour make him *their king*, and set him upon the throne in their souls: let him that has *fed us*, *rule us*. But, 2. It was an *irregular zeal*; for, 1. It was *grounded* upon a mistake concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were to be of *this world*; and he must appear with outward pomp, a crown on his head, and an army at his foot, such a king as this they would make him, which was as great a disparagement to his glory, as it would be to lacker gold, or paint a ruby. Right notions of Christ's kingdom, would keep us to right methods for the advancing of it. 2. It was excited by the love of the flesh; they would make him their king, who could feed them so plentifully without their toil, and save them from the curse of *eating their bread in the sweat of their face*. 3. It was intended to carry on a *secular design*; they hoped this might be a fair opportunity of shaking off the Roman yoke, which they were weary of. If they had one to head them who could victual an army cheaper than another could provide for a family, they were sure of the sinews of the war, and could not fail of success, and the recovery of their ancient liberties. Thus is religion often prostituted to a secular interest, and Christ is served only to *serve a turn*, *Rom. xvi. 18.* *Vix quæritur Jesus, propter Jesum, sed propter aliud*, *Aug. Nay*, 4. It was a tumultuous, seditious attempt, and a disturbance of the publick peace; it would make the country a seat of war, and expose it to the resentments of the Roman power. 5. It was contrary to the mind of our Lord Jesus himself; for they would take him *by force*, whether he would or no. Note, Those who force honours upon Christ which he has not required at their hands, displease him, and do him the greatest dishonour. They that say, *I am of Christ*, in opposition to those that are of Apollos, and Cephas, so making Christ the head of a party, take him by force to make him a king, contrary to his own mind.

(2.) Here is an instance of the humility, and self-denial of the Lord Jesus, that when they would have made him a king, he

departed; so far was he from countenancing the design, that he effectually quashed it. Herein he has left a testimony, (1.) Against ambition, and affectation of worldly honour, to which he was perfectly mortified, and has taught us to be so. Had they come to take him by force, and make him a prisoner, he could not have been more industrious to abscond, than he was when they would make him a king. Let not us then covet to be the *idols of the crowd*, nor be *desirous of vain glory*. (2.) Against faction and sedition, treason and rebellion, and whatever tends to disturb the peace of kings and provinces. By this it appears he was no enemy to Cæsar, nor would have his followers be so, but the *quiet in the land*; that he would have his ministers decline every thing that looks like sedition, or looks towards it, and improve their interest only for their works sake.

2. Observe *whither* he retired, he *departed again into a mountain*, *eis tō ōros*, into the mountain, the mountain where he had preached, *ver. 3.* whence he came down into the plain to feed the people, and then returned to it alone, to be private. Christ, though so useful in the places of concourse, yet chose sometimes to be alone, to teach us to sequester our selves from the world now and then, for the more free converse with God and our own souls, and *never less alone*, saith the serious Christian, *than when alone*. Publick services must not juggle out private devotions.

2. Here is the disciples distress at sea. *They that go down to the sea in ships, these see the works of the Lord, for he raiseth the stormy wind*, *Psalm. cvii. 23.* Apply that to these disciples.

1. Here is their *going down to the sea* in a ship, *ver. 16, 17.* *When even was come*, and they had done their day's work, it was time to look homewards, and therefore they went aboard, and set sail for Capernaum. This they did by particular direction from their Master, with design (as it should seem) to get them out of the way of the temptation of countenancing those that would have made him a king.

2. Here is the *stormy wind* arising, and *fulfilling the word of God*. They were Christ's disciples, and were now in the way of their duty, and Christ was now in the mount praying for them, and yet in this distress. The perils and afflictions of this present time, may very well consist with our interest in Christ and his intercession. They had lately been feasted at Christ's table, but after the sun-shine of comfort expect a storm. (1.) *It was now dark*, this made the storm the more dangerous and uncomfortable. Sometimes the people of God are in trouble, and cannot see their way out; in the dark concerning the cause of their trouble, concerning the design and tendency of it, and what the issue will be. (2.) *Jesus was not come to them*. When they were in that storm, *Mat. viii. 21.* *Jesus was with them*, but now their beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. The absence of Christ is the great aggravation of the troubles of Christians. (3.) *The sea arose by reason of a great wind*. It was calm and fair when they put to sea; they were not so presumptuous as to lanch out in a storm, but it arose when they were *at sea*. In times of tranquillity we must prepare for trouble, for it may arise when we little think of it. Let it comfort good people, when they happen to be in storms at sea, that the disciples of Christ were so; and let the promises of a gracious God balance the threats of an angry sea; though in a storm, and *in the dark*, so were Christ's disciples. Clouds and darkness sometimes surround the children of the light, and of the day.

3. Here is Christ's seasonable approach to them when they were in this peril, *ver. 19.* *They had rowed* (being forced by the contrary winds to betake themselves to their oars) *about twenty-five or thirty furlongs*. The holy Spirit that indicted this, could have ascertained the number of furlongs precisely, but that being only circumstantial, that is left to be expressed according to the conjecture of the penman. And when they were got off a good way at sea, they *see Jesus walking on the sea*. See here, (1.) The power Christ has over the laws and customs of nature, to controll and dispense with them at his pleasure. It is natural for heavy bodies to sink in water, but Christ walked *upon* the water, as upon dry land, which was more than Moses's dividing the water, and walking *through* the water. (2.) The concern Christ has for his disciples in distress, *he drew nigh to the ship*; for therefore he walked upon the water, as he *rides upon the heavens for the help of his people*, *Deut. xxxiii. 26.* He will not leave them comfortless, when they seem to be *tossed with tempests*, and *not comforted*. When they are banished, as John, into remote places, or shut up as Paul and Silas in close places, he will find access to them, and will be nigh them. (3.) The relief Christ gives to his disciples in their fears. *They were afraid*, more afraid of an apparition (for so they supposed him to be) than of the winds and waves. It is more terrible to wrestle with the rulers of the darkness of this world, than with a tempestuous sea. When they thought a dæmon haunted them, and perhaps was instrumental to raise the storm, they were more terrified than they had been while they saw nothing in it but what was natural. Note, 1. Our real distresses are often much increased by our imaginary ones, the creatures of our own fancy. 2. Even the approaches of comfort and deliverance are often so misconstrued, as to become the occasions of fear and perplexity. We are often not only *worse frightened than hurt*, but then most *frightened* when we



we are ready to be *helped*. But when they were in this fright, how affectionately did Christ silence their fears with that compassionate word, *ver. 20. It is I, be not afraid!* Nothing more powerful to convince sinners than that word, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*; nothing more powerful to comfort saints than this, *I am Jesus whom thou lovest*; it is I that love thee, and seek thy good: be not afraid of me, no nor of the storm; when trouble is nigh, Christ is nigh.

4. Here is their speedy arrival at the port they were bound for, *ver. 17. (1.) They welcomed Christ into the ship; they willingly received him.* Note, Christ's absenting himself for a time, is but so much the more to *endear himself* at his return to his disciples, that value his presence above any thing; see *Cant. iii. 4.* (2.) Christ *landed* them safe at the shore; *immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.* Note, 1. The ship of the church, in which the disciples of Christ have *embarked* themselves and their all, may be much shattered and distressed, yet it shall come safe to the harbour at last; *tossed* at sea, but not *lost*; cast down, but not destroyed; the bush burning, but not consumed. 2. The power and presence of the church's king, shall expedite and facilitate her deliverance, and conquer the difficulties which have baffled the skill and industry of all her other friends. The disciples had rowed hard, but could not make their point till they had got Christ in the ship, and then the work was *done suddenly*. If we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, have received him willingly, though the night be dark, and the wind high, yet we may comfort ourselves with this, we shall be at shore shortly, and are nearer to it than we think we are. Many a doubting soul is fetched to heaven by a pleasing surprize, or ever it is aware.

22. ¶ The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entred, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone: 23. (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks) 24. When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. 25. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? 26. Jesus answered them, and said, Verily, verily I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

In these verses we have,

First, The careful enquiry which the people made after Christ, *ver. 23, 24.* They saw the disciples go to sea, they saw Christ retire to the mountain, probably with an intimation that he desired to be private for some time; but their hearts being set upon it to *make him a king*, they way-laid his return; and *the day following*, the hot fit of their zeal still continuing,

1. They are here *much at a loss* for him; he was gone, and they wot not what was become of him; they saw there was *no other boat there*, but that in which the disciples went off, providence so ordering it for the confirming of the miracle of his walking on the sea, for there was no boat for him to go in. They observed also, that *Jesus did not go with his disciples*, but they went off alone, and had left him among *them* on their side of the water. Note, Those who would find Christ, must diligently observe all his motions, and learn to understand the tokens of his presence and absence that they may steer accordingly.

2. They are very *industrious in seeking him*. They searched the places thereabouts, and when *they saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples*, neither he nor any one that could give tidings of him, they resolved to search elsewhere. Note, Those that would find Christ, must accomplish a diligent search; must seek till they find; must go from sea to sea to seek the word of God, rather than live without it. And those whom Christ has feasted with the bread of life, should have their souls carried out in earnest desires towards him. Much would have more in communion with Christ. Now, 1. They resolved to go to Capernaum in quest of him; there was his head quarters, where he usually resided. Thither his disciples were gone, and they knew he would not be long absent from *them*; they that would find Christ, must go forth by the footsteps of the flock. 2. Providence favoured them with an opportunity of going thither by sea, which was the speediest way; for there *came other boats from Tiberias*, that lay further off upon the same shore, *nigh*, though not so nigh to the

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place where they did *eat bread*, in which they might soon make a trip to Capernaum, and probably the boats were bound for that port. Note, Those that in sincerity seek Christ, and seek opportunities of converse with him, are commonly owned and assisted by providence in those pursuits. The evangelist having occasion to mention their eating the *multiplied bread*, adds, *after that the Lord had given thanks*, *ver. 11.* So much were the disciples affected with their Master's giving thanks, that they can never forget the impressions made upon them by it, but took a pleasure in remembering the gracious words that then proceeded out of his mouth. That was the grace and beauty of that meal; and made it remarkable, their hearts burned within them.

3. They laid hold on the opportunity that offered itself, and *they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.* They did not defer in hopes to see him again *on this side the water*, but their convictions being strong, and their desires warm, they followed him presently. Good motions are often crushed, and come to nothing, for want of being *prosecuted in time*. They came to Capernaum, and for ought appears, these unsound hypocritical followers of Christ had a *calm and pleasant* passage, while his sincere disciples had a *rough and stormy* one. It is not strange if it fare worst with the best men in this evil world. They *came seeking Jesus*. Note, Those that would find Christ, and find comfort in him, must be willing to take pains, and as those here *compass* sea and land to seek and serve him who came from heaven to earth to seek and save us.

Secondly, The success of this enquiry, *ver. 25. They found him on the other side of the sea.* Note, Christ will be found of those that seek him, first or last; and it is worth while to cross a sea, nay to go *from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth*, to seek Christ, if we may but find him at last. Those people appeared afterwards to be unsound, and not acted by any good principle, and yet were thus zealous. Note, Hypocrites may be very forward in their attendance on God's ordinances. If men have *no more* to shew for their love to Christ, *but only* their running after sermons and prayers, and their pangs of affection to good preaching, they have reason to suspect themselves no better than this *eager crowd*. But though these people were no better principled, and Christ knew it, yet he was willing to be found of them, and admitted them into fellowship with him; if we could know the hearts of hypocrites, yet while their profession is plausible, we must not exclude them our communion, much less when we do not.

Thirdly, The question they put to him when they found him. *Rabbi, when camest thou hither?* It should seem by *ver. 59.* that they found him *in the synagogue*. They knew that was the likeliest place to seek Christ in, for it was *his custom* to attend publick assemblies for religious worship, *Luke iv. 16.* Note, Christ must be sought, and will be found in the congregations of his people, and in the administration of his ordinances; publick worship is what Christ chuseth to own, and grace with his presence, and the manifestations of himself. There they found him, and all they had to say to him was, *Rabbi, when camest thou hither!* They saw he would not be made a king, and therefore say no more of that, but call him Rabbi, their teacher. Their enquiry refers not only to the *time*, but to the *manner* of his conveying himself thither, not only *when*, but *how* camest thou hither, for there was no boat for him to come in. They were curious in asking concerning Christ's motions, but not solicitous to observe their own.

Fourthly, The answer Christ gave them, not direct to their question. What was it to them, when and how he came thither? but such an answer as their case required.

1. He discovers the *corrupt principle* that they *acted from* in their following of him, *ver. 26. Verily, verily I say unto you, I that search the heart, and know what is in man, I the Amen, the faithful witness, Rev. iii. 14, 15. ye seek me*, that is well, but it is not from a good principle; Christ knows not only *what* we do, but *why* we do it. These followed Christ, 1. Not for his doctrine's sake; *not because ye saw the miracles*. The miracles were the great confirmation of his doctrine, Nicodemus sought for him for the sake of them, *John iii. 2.* and argued from the power of his works, to the truth of his word, but these here were so stupid and mindless, that they never considered that. But, 2. It was for their own bellies sake, *because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled*; not because he taught them, but because he fed them. He had given them, 1. A *full meal's meat*, *they did eat, and were filled*; and some of them perhaps were so poor, that they had not known of a long time before now, what it was to have their bellies full, to eat and leave. 2. A *dainty meal's meat*; it is probable as the miraculous wine was the best wine; so was the miraculous food, more than ordinary pleasant. 3. A *cheap meal's meat*, that cost them nothing, no reckoning brought in. Note, Many follow Christ for *loaves*, and not for *love*. Thus they do who aim at secular advantages in their profession of religion, and follow it, because by this craft they got their preferments; *Quanti profuit nobis hæc fabula de Christo*; said one of the Popes: these people *complimented* Christ with Rabbi, and shewed him great respect, yet he told them thus faithfully of their hypocrisy; his ministers must hence learn not to flatter those that flatter them, nor to be *bribe*d by fair words, but to give faithful reproofs where there



there is cause for them; nor cry *peace* to all that cry *rabbi* to them.

2. He directs them to better principles, *ver. 27. Labour for that meat that endures to everlasting life.* He had discoursed with the woman of Samaria, under the similitude of *water*, here he speaks of the same things under the similitude of *meat*, taking occasion from the loaves they had eaten. His design is,

1. To moderate our worldly pursuits. *Labour not for the meat that perisheth.* This doth not forbid honest labour for food convenient, 2 *Theff. iii. 12.* But we must not make the things of this world our chief care and concern. Note, 1. The things of the world are *meat that perisheth.* Worldly wealth, honour and pleasure, these are *meat*, they *feed the fancy*; and many times that is all, and *fill the belly*, things which men *hunger* after as *meat*, and glut themselves with, and which a carnal heart as long as they last may make a shift to live upon; but they *perish*, are of a perishing nature, wither of themselves, and are exposed to a thousand accidents; those that have the largest share of them, are not sure to have them while they live, but are sure to leave them and lose them when they die. 2. It is therefore folly for us inordinately to labour after them. 1. We must not labour in religion, nor work the works thereof, *for this perishing meat*, with an eye to this, must not make our religion subservient to a worldly interest, nor aim at *secular advantages* in *sacred exercises*. 2. We must not at all *labour* for this meat; that is, we must not make these perishing things our *chief good*, nor make our care and pains about them our *chief business*; not seek those things *first*, and *most*, *Prov. xxiii. 45.*

2. To quicken and excite our gracious pursuits: bestow your pains to better purpose, and *labour for that meat* which belongs to the soul. Of which he shews,

1. That it is *unspeakably desirable*; it is meat which *endures to everlasting life*; it is a happiness which will last as long as we must, which not only itself endures eternally, but will nourish us up to everlasting life. The blessings of the new covenant are our preparative for eternal life, our preservative to it, and the pledge and earnest of it.

2. It is *undoubtedly attainable.* Shall all the treasures of the world be ransacked, and all the fruits of the earth gathered together to furnish us with provisions that will last to eternity? No, *The sea saith it is not in me*; among all the treasures hid in the sand, *it cannot be gotten for gold*; but it is that *which the Son of man shall give*; *ὃν δώσει*, either which *meat*, or which *life* the Son of man shall give. Observe here, 1. Who gives this meat; the *Son of man*, the great householder, and master of the stores, who is entrusted with the administration of the kingdom of God among men, and the dispensation of the gifts, graces, and comforts of that kingdom, and has power to give eternal life, with all the means of it, and preparations for it. We are bid to *labour for it*, as if it were to be got by our own industry, and sold upon that valuable consideration (as the heathen said, *Dii laboribus omnia vendunt*). But when we have laboured never so much for it, we have not merited it as our *hire*, but the Son of man *gives it*. And what more free than gift? It is an encouragement, that he who has the giving of it is the *Son of man*, for then we may hope the *Sons of men* that seek it, and labour for it, shall not fail to have it. 2. What authority he has to give it; for *him hath God the Father sealed*, *τῷ ᾧ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐσφράγισεν, ὁ Θεός*, for him the Father hath sealed (*i. e.* proved and evidenced) to be *God*; so some read it; he has declared him to be the Son of God with power. He hath *sealed him*, *i. e.* hath given him full authority to deal between God and man, as *God's ambassador* to man, and man's *intercessor* with God; and has proved his commission by miracles; having given him *authority*, he hath given us *assurance* of it; having intrusted him with *unlimited powers*, he hath satisfied us with *undoubted proofs* of them; so that as he might go on with confidence in his undertaking for us, so may we in our resignations to him. *God the Father* sealed him with the Spirit that rested on him, by the voice from heaven, by the testimony he bore to him in signs and wonders. Divine Revelation is perfected in him, in him the *vision* and *prophecy* is *sealed up*, *Dan. ix. 24.* to him all believers *seal*, that he is true, *John iii. 33.* and in him they are all *sealed*, 2 *Cor. i. 22.*

28. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 30. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? 31. Our Fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34. Then said they unto him,

Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst. 36. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. 38. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which feeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 41. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42. And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? 43. Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47. Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48. I am that bread of life. 49. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52. The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Whether this conference was with the Capernaïtes, in whose synagogue Christ now was, or with those who came from the other side of the sea, is not certain nor material; however it is an instance of Christ's condescension, that he gave them leave to ask him questions, and did not resent the interruption as an affront; no not from his common hearers, though not his immediate followers. Those that would be apt to teach, must be swift to hear, and study to answer. It is the wisdom of teachers, when they are asked even impertinent, unprofitable questions, from thence to take occasion to answer that which is profitable, that the question may be rejected, but not the querist.

Now, 1. Christ having told them that *they must work for the meat* he spoke of, must *labour* for it, they enquire what work they must do, and he answers them, *ver. 28, 29.*

1. Their enquiry was *pertinent* enough, *ver. 28. What shall we do that we may work the works of God.* Some understand it as a *pert-question*, what works of God can we do more and better, than those we do in obedience to the law of Moses; but I rather take it as a humble serious question, speaking them to be at least for the present in a good mind, and willing to know and do their duty; and I take it that they who asked this question how and what, *ver. 30.* and made that request, *ver. 34.* were not the same persons with those that murmured, *ver. 41. 42.* and strove, *ver. 52.* for those are expressly called *the Jews*, which came out of Judea, (for those were strictly called Jews) to caviel, whereas these were of Galilee, and came to be taught. This question here intimates;



intimates, that they were convinced, that they who would obtain this everlasting meat; (1.) They must aim to do something great. They that *look high* in their expectations, and hope to enjoy the *glory of God*, must *aim high* in those endeavours, and study to *do the works of God*, works which he requires, and will accept of, *works of God* distinguished from the works of worldly men in their worldly pursuits. It is not enough to speak the words of God, but we must do the works of God. (2.) That they must be willing to do any thing. *What shall we do?* Lord, I am ready to do whatever thou appointest, though never so displeasing to flesh and blood, *Acts ix. 6.*

2. Christ's answer was plain enough, *ver. 29. This is the work of God that ye believe.* Note, 1. The work of faith is the work of God. They enquire after the *works of God*, in the plural number, being careful about *many things*; but Christ directs them to one work which includes all, the one thing needful, that *ye believe*, which supersedes all the works of the ceremonial law; the work which is necessary to the acceptance of all the other works, and which produceth them, for without faith you cannot please God. It is *God's work*, for it is of his *working in us*, it subjects the soul to his working on us, and quickens the soul in working for him. 2. That faith is the work of God, which closeth with Christ, and relies upon him. It is to *believe on him* as one whom God hath sent, as God's commissioner in the great affair of peace between God and man, and as such to *rest* upon him, and *reign our selves* to him. See *John xiv. 1.*

2. Christ having told them that the *Son of man* would give them this meat, they enquire concerning him, and he answers their enquiry.

1. Their enquiry is after a sign, *ver. 30. What sign shewest thou?* Thus far they were right, that since he required them to give him credit, he should produce his *credentials*, and make it out by miracle that he was *sent of God*. Moses having confirmed his mission by signs, it was requisite that Christ who came to set aside the ceremonial law, should in like manner confirm his. *What dost thou work?* What dost thou drive at? What lasting characters of a divine power dost thou design to leave upon thy doctrine? But herein they missed it. (1.) That they over-looked the many miracles which they had seen wrought by him, and which amounted to an abundant proof of his divine mission: Is this a time of day to ask what sign shewest thou, especially at Capernaum, the *staple* of miracles, where he had done so many mighty works, signs so significant of his office and undertaking. Were not these very persons but the other day miraculously fed by him? None so blind as they that will not see, for they may be so blind, as to question whether it be day or no, when the sun shines in their faces. (2.) That they preferred the miraculous feeding of Israel in the wilderness before all the miracles Christ wrought, *ver. 31. Our fathers did eat manna in the desert*, and to strengthen the objection, they quote a scripture for it, he gave them bread from heaven, taken from *Psal. lxxviii. 24. He gave them of the corn of heaven.* What a good use might be made of this story which they here refer to! It was a memorable instance of God's power and goodness, often mentioned to the glory of God, *Neh. ix. 20, 21.* yet see how these people perverted it, and made an ill use of it.

1. Christ reproved them for their fondness of the miraculous bread, and bid them not set their hearts upon meat which periseth; why, say they, meat for the belly was the great good thing that God gave to our fathers in the desert, and why should not we then labour for that meat? If God made much of them, why should not we be for those that will make much of us?

2. Christ had fed five thousand men with five loaves, and had given them that as one sign, to prove him *sent of God*; but under colour of magnifying the miracles of Moses, they tacitly undervalue that miracle of Christ, and evade the evidence of it, Christ fed his thousands, but Moses his hundred thousands: Christ fed them but once, and then reproved those who followed him in hope to be still fed, and put them off with a discourse of spiritual food; but Moses fed his followers forty years, and miracles were not their rarities, but their daily bread; Christ fed them with bread out of the earth, barley bread, and fishes out of the sea; but Moses fed Israel with bread from heaven; angels food. Thus big did these Jews talk of the manna which their fathers did eat, but their fathers had slighted it, as much as they did now the barley loaves, and called it *light bread*, *Numb. xxi. 5.* Thus apt are we to slight and over-look the appearances of God's power and grace in our own times, while we pretend to admire the wonders which our fathers told us of. Suppose this miracle of Christ was out-done by that of Moses, yet there were other instances, in which Christ's miracles out-shone his; and besides, all true miracles prove a divine doctrine, though not equally illustrious in the circumstances, which were ever diversified according as the occasion did require. As much as the manna excelled the barley loaves, so much and much more did the doctrine of Christ excel the law of Moses, and his heavenly institutions the carnal ordinances of that dispensation.

2. Here is Christ's reply to this enquiry; wherein,

1. He rectifies their mistake concerning the typical manna. It was true, their fathers did eat manna in the desert. But, 1. It was not Moses that gave it them, nor were they obliged to him

for it, he was but the instrument, and therefore they must look beyond him, to God. We do not find that Moses did so much as pray to God for the manna; and he spoke unadvisedly, when he said, *must we fetch water out of the rock?* for Moses gave them not either that bread, or that water. 2. It was not given them, as they imagined, from heaven, from the highest heavens, but only from the clouds, and therefore not so much excelling that which had its rise from the earth, as they thought. Because the scripture saith, he gave them bread from heaven, it doth not follow that it was heavenly bread, or was intended to be the nourishment of souls. Misunderstanding scripture-language occasions many mistakes in the things of God.

2. He informs them concerning the true manna, of which that was a type. *But my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven;* that which is truly and properly the bread from heaven, of which that was but a shadow and figure, is now given, not to your fathers who are dead and gone, but to you of this present age, for whom the better things were reserved: He is now giving you that bread from heaven which is truly so called: As much as the throne of God's glory is above the clouds of the air, so much doth the spiritual bread of the everlasting gospel excel the manna. In calling God his father, he speaks himself greater than Moses; for Moses was faithful but as a servant, Christ as a son, *Heb. iii. 5.*

Now this objection of theirs concerning the manna, gave further occasion to Christ, to discourse of himself under the similitude of bread, and of believing under the similitude of eating and drinking; to which, together with his putting of both together in the eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, together with the remarks made upon it by the hearers, the rest of this conference may be reduced.

First, Christ having spoken of himself as the great gift of God, and the true bread, *ver. 32.* largely explains, and confirms this, that we may rightly know him.

1. He here shews that he is the true bread; this he repeats again and again, *ver. 33, 35, 48, 49, 50, 51.* Observe,

1. That Christ is bread; is that to the soul which bread is to the body, nourisheth and supporteth the spiritual life, is the staff of it, as bread doth the bodily life; it is the staff of life. The doctrine of the gospel concerning Christ; that he is the mediator between God and man, that he is our peace, our righteousness, our redeemer; by these things do men live. Our bodies could better live without food, than our souls without Christ. Bread-corn is bruised, *Isa. xxviii. 28.* so was Christ; he was born at Bethlehem, the house of bread, and typified by the shew-bread.

2. That he is the bread of God, *ver. 33.* divine bread; it is he that is of God, *ver. 46.* bread which my Father gives, *ver. 32.* which he has made to be the food of our souls; the bread of God's family, his children's bread. The Levitical sacrifices are called the bread of God, *Lev. xxi. 21, 22.* and Christ is the great sacrifice; Christ in his word and ordinances the feast upon the sacrifice.

3. That he is the bread of life, *ver. 35.* and again, *ver. 48.* that bread of life, alluding to the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden, which was to Adam the seal of that part of the covenant, do this and live, of which he might eat and live. Christ is the bread of life, for he is the fruit of the tree of life. (1.) He is the living bread, so he explains himself, *ver. 51. I am the living bread.* Bread is it self a dead thing, and nourisheth not, but by the help of the faculties of a living body, but Christ is himself living bread, and nourisheth by his own power. Manna was a dead thing, if kept but one night it putrefied, and bred worms; but Christ is ever living, everlasting bread, that never moulds, or waxeth old. The doctrine of Christ crucified, is now as strengthening and comforting to a believer as ever it was, and his mediation still of as much value and efficacy as ever. (2.) He gives life unto the world, *ver. 33.* spiritual and eternal life; the life of the soul in union and communion with God here, and in the vision and fruition of him hereafter; a life that includes in it all happiness. The manna did only preserve and support life, did not preserve and perpetuate life, much less restore it; but Christ gives life to those that were dead in sin. The manna was ordained only for the life of the Israelites, but Christ is given for the life of the world; none are excluded from the benefit of this bread, but such as exclude themselves. Christ came to put life into the minds of men; principles productive of acceptable performances.

4. That he is the bread which came down from heaven; this is oft repeated here, *ver. 33, 50, 51, 38.* This notes, (1.) The divinity of Christ's person. As God he had a being in heaven, from whence he came to take our nature upon him; I came down from heaven, from whence we may infer his antiquity, he was in the beginning with God; his ability, for heaven is the firmament of power; and his authority, he came with a divine commission. (2.) The divine original of all that good which flows to us through him. He cometh, not only *καταβὰς*, *ver. 51.* but *καταβάνων*, he is descending, noting a constant communication of light, life, and love from God to believers through Christ, as the manna descended daily; see *Eph. i. 3. Omnia desuper.*

5. That



5. That he is *that bread*, of which the *manna* was a type and figure, *ver. 58. that bread, the true bread, ver. 32.* As the rock that they drank of was Christ, so the manna they eat of *spiritual bread*, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. *Manna* was given to Israel, so Christ to the spiritual Israel. There was *manna* enough for them all, so in Christ a fulness of grace for all believers; he that *gathers much* of this *manna*, will have none to spare when he comes to use it; and he that gathers little, when his grace comes to be perfected in glory, shall find that *he has no lack*. *Manna* was to be gathered in the morning, and those that would find Christ must *seek him early*. *Manna* was sweet, and as the author of the *wisdom of Solomon* tells us, *chap. xvi. 20.* was agreeable to every palate; and to them that believe Christ is *precious*. Israel lived upon *manna* till they came to Canaan; and Christ is our life. There was a memorial of the *manna* preserved in the ark, so of Christ in the Lord's supper, as the food of souls.

2. He here shews what his undertaking was, and what his errand into the world. Laying aside the metaphor, he speaks plainly, and speaks no proverb, giving us an account of his business among men, *ver. 38, 39, 40.*

1. He assures us in general that he came from heaven upon his Father's business, *ver. 38. not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him.* He came from heaven, which speaks him an intelligent, active being, who voluntarily descended to this lower world, a long journey, and a great step downwards, considering the glories of the world he came from, and the calamities of the world he came to; we may well ask with wonder, what moved him to such an expedition? And here he tells us, he did not come to do his own will, but the will of his Father; not that he had any will that stood in competition with the will of his Father, but they to whom he spoke, suspected he might; no, faith he, my own will is not the spring I act from, nor the rule I go by, but I am come to do the will of him that sent me. That is, 1. Christ did not come into the world as a private person, that acts for himself only, but under a public character, to act for others, as an ambassador, or plenipotentiary, authorized by a public commission; he came into the world as God's great agent, and the world's great physician. It was not any business that brought him hither, but he came to settle affairs between parties, no less considerable than the great Creator, and the whole creation. 2. Christ, when he was in the world, did not carry on any private design, nor had any separate interest at all, distinct from theirs for whom he acted. The scope of his whole life was to glorify God, and do good to men; he therefore never consulted his own ease, safety, or quiet, but when he was to lay down his life, though he had a human nature which startled at it, he set aside the consideration of that, and resolved his will, as man, into the will of God; *not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

2. He acquaints us in particular with that will of the Father which he came to do; he here declares the decree, the instructions he was to pursue.

1. The private instructions given to Christ, that he should be sure to save all the chosen remnant; and this is the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son; *ver. 38. This is the Father's will which hath sent me;* this is the charge I am intrusted with, that of all which he hath given me I should lose none.

Note, (1.) There is a certain number of the children of men, given by the Father to Jesus Christ to be his care, and so to be to him for a name and a praise; given him for an inheritance, for a possession. Let him do all that for them which their case requires; teach them, and heal them, pay their debt, and plead their cause, prepare them for, and preserve them to, eternal life, and then let him make his best of them. The Father might dispose of them as he pleased: as creatures, their lives and beings were derived from him; as sinners, their lives and beings were forfeited to him; he might have sold them for the satisfaction of his justice, and delivered them to the tormentors; but he pitched upon them to be the monuments of his mercy, and delivered them to the Saviour. Those whom God chose to be the objects of his special love, he lodged as a trust in the hands of Christ.

(2.) Jesus Christ has undertaken that he will lose none of those that were thus given him of the Father. The many sons whom he was to bring to glory, shall all be forth-coming, and none of them missing, *Mat. xviii. 14.* None of them shall be lost for want of a sufficient price to purchase them, or sufficient grace to sanctify them. *If I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, let me bear the blame for ever, Gen. xliii. 9.*

(3.) Christ's undertaking for those that are given him, extends to the resurrection of their bodies. *I will raise it up again at the last day;* which supposeth all that goes before, but this is to crown and complete the undertaking; the body is a part of the man, and therefore a part of Christ's purchase and charge; it pertains to the promises, and therefore it shall not be lost. The undertaking is not only, that he shall lose none, no person, but that he shall lose nothing, no part of the person, and therefore not the body. Christ's undertaking will never be accomplished till the resurrection, when the souls and bodies of the saints shall be re-united, and gathered to Christ, that he may present them to the Father; *behold I, and the children that thou hast given me, Heb. ii. 13. 2 Tim. i. 12.*

(4.) The spring and original of all this, is the sovereign will of God; the counsels of his will, according to which he worketh all this. This was the commandment he gave to his Son when he sent him into the world, and to which the Son always had an eye.

2. The public instructions which were to be given to the children of men, in what way, and upon what terms, they might obtain salvation by Christ; and this is the covenant of grace between God and man. Who the particular persons were that were given to Christ is a secret, *the Lord knows them that are his*, we do not, nor is it fit we should; but though their names are concealed, their characters are published. An offer is made of life and happiness upon gospel terms, that by it those that were given to Christ might be brought to him, and others left inexcusable, *ver. 40. this is the will, the revealed will of him that sent me;* the method agreed upon, upon which to proceed with the children of men, that every one, Jew or Gentile, that sees the Son and believes on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up. This is gospel indeed, good news.

Is it not reviving to hear this? 1. That eternal life may be had, if it be not our own fault. That whereas upon the sin of the first Adam the way of the tree of life was blocked up, by the grace of the second Adam it is laid open again: The crown of glory is set before us as the prize of our high calling, which we may run for and obtain. 2. Every one may have it. This gospel is to be preached, this offer made to all, and none can say, it belongs not to me, *Rev. xxii. 17.* 3. This everlasting life is sure to all those who believe in Christ, and to them only. He that sees the Son, and believes on him shall be saved. Some understand this seeing as a limitation of this condition of salvation to those only that have the revelation of Christ and his grace made to them. Every one that has the opportunity of being acquainted with Christ, and improves that so well as to believe in him, shall have everlasting life, so that none shall be condemned for unbelief, however they may for other sins, but those who have had the gospel preached to them, who like these Jews here, *ver. 36. have seen, and yet have not believed;* have known Christ, and yet trusted in him. But I rather understand seeing, here to mean the same thing with believing, for it is θεωρεῖν, which signifies not so much the sight of the eye, (as *ver. 36. εἰσέβητε με,*) as the contemplation of the mind. Every one that sees the Son, that is, believes on him, sees him with an eye of faith, by which we come to be duly acquainted and affected with the doctrine of the gospel concerning him. It is to look upon him, as the stung Israelites upon the brazen serpent. It is not a blind faith that Christ requires, that we should be willing to have our eyes put out, and then follow him, but that we should see him, and see what ground we go upon in our faith. It is then right, when it is not taken up upon hear-say, believing as the church believes, but is the result of a due consideration of, and insight into, the motives of credibility: *Now mine eye sees thee; we have heard him ourselves.* 4. Those who believe in Jesus Christ, in order to their having everlasting life, shall be raised up by his power at the last day. He had it in charge as his Father's will, *ver. 39. and here he solemnly makes it his own undertaking, I will raise him up,* which signifies not only the return of the body to life, but the putting of the whole man into a full possession of the eternal life promised.

Now Christ discoursing thus concerning himself, as the bread of life that came down from heaven, let us see what remarks his hearers made upon it.

1. When they heard of such a thing as the bread of God, which gives life, they heartily prayed for it, *ver. 34. Lord, evermore give us this bread.* I cannot think that this is spoken scoffingly, and in a way of derision, as most interpreters understand it; give us such bread as this if thou canst; let us be fed with it, not for one meal, as with the five loaves, but evermore; as if this were no better a prayer than that of the impenitent thief, *If thou be the Christ, save thy self and us.* But I take this request to be made, though ignorantly, yet honestly, and to be well meant; for they call him Lord, and desire a share in what he gives, whatever he means by it. General, and confused notions of divine things, produce in carnal hearts some kind of desires towards them, and wishes of them; like Balaam's wish, to die the death of the righteous. Those who have an indistinct knowledge of the things of God, who see men as trees walking, make, as I may call them, inarticulate prayers for spiritual blessings. They think the favour of God a good thing, and heaven a fine place, and cannot but wish them their own, while they have no value or desire at all of that holiness which is necessary both to the one, and to the other. Let this be the desire of our souls; have we tasted that the Lord is gracious, been feasted with the word of God, and Christ in the word, let us say, *Lord, evermore give us this bread:* Let the bread of life be our daily bread, the heavenly manna our continual feast, and let us never know the want of it.

2. But when they understood, that by this bread of life Jesus meant himself, and then they despised it. Whether they were the same persons that had prayed for it, *ver. 34.* or some others of the company, doth not appear; it seems to be some others, for they are called Jews. Now it is said, *ver. 41. they murmured at him.*



him. This comes in immediately after that solemn declaration Christ had made of God's will, and his own undertaking concerning man's salvation, *ver. 39, 40.* which certainly were some of the most weighty and gracious words that ever proceeded out of the mouth of our Lord Jesus, the most faithful, and best worthy of all acceptation; one would think, that like Israel in Egypt, when they heard that God had thus *visited* them, they should have bowed their heads and worshipped; but, on the contrary, instead of closing with the offer made them, they murmured, quarrelled with what Christ said; and though they did not openly oppose and contradict it, yet they privately whispered among themselves in contempt of it, and instilled into one another's minds prejudices against it. Many that will not professedly contradict the doctrine of Christ, their cavils are so weak and groundless, that they are either ashamed to own them, or afraid to have them silenced, yet say in their heart, they *do not like it.*

Now, 1. That which offended them was Christ's asserting his original to be *from heaven*, *ver. 41, 42.* How is it that he saith, *I came down from heaven?* They had heard of angels coming down from heaven, but never of a man; over-looking the proofs he had given them of his being more than a man.

2. That which they thought justified them herein, was, that they knew his extraction on earth; *Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?* They took it heinously that he should say he came down from heaven, when he was *one of them.* They speak slightly of his blessed name, *Jesus, is not this Jesus?* They take it for granted that Joseph was really his father, though he was only *reputed* to be so. Note, Mistakes concerning the person of Christ, as if he were a mere man, conceived, and born by ordinary generation, occasion the offence that is taken at his doctrine and offices. Those who set him on a level with other the sons of men, whose father and mother we know, no wonder if they derogate from the honour of his satisfaction, and the mysteries of his undertaking, and, like the Jews here, murmur at his promise to *raise us up at the last day.*

Secondly, Christ having spoken of faith as the great *work of God*, *ver. 29.* discourseth largely concerning this work, instructing, and encouraging us in it.

1. He shews what it is to *believe in Christ.*

(1.) To believe in Christ, is to *come to Christ*; he that *comes to me*, is the same with he that *believes in me*, *ver. 35.* and again, *ver. 37.* *He that comes unto me*; so, *ver. 44, 45.* Repentance towards God is *coming to him*, *Jer. iii. 22.* as our chief good, and highest end; and so faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ is coming to him as our prince and Saviour, and our way to the Father. It notes the out-goings of our affections towards him, for those are the motions of the soul, and actions agreeable; it is to *come off* from all those things that stand in opposition to him, or competition with him, and to *come up* to those terms upon which life and salvation are offered to us through him. When he was here on earth, it was more than barely coming where he was; so it is now, more than coming to his word and ordinances.

(2.) It is to *feed upon Christ*, *ver. 51.* *If any man eat of this bread*; the former notes applying ourselves to Christ, this notes applying Christ to ourselves, with appetite and delight, that we may receive life and strength, and comfort from him: To feed on him as the Israelites on the manna, having quitted the *flesh-pots* of Egypt, and not depending on the *labour of their hands*, to eat of that, but living purely on the bread given them from heaven.

2. He shews what is to be got by believing in Christ, what will he give us, if we *come to him*? What shall we be the better, if we *feed upon him*? *Want*, and *death*, are the chief things we dread; may we but be assured of the comforts of our being, and the continuance of it in the midst of those comforts, we have enough; now these two are here secured to true believers.

1. They shall never want, *never hunger, never thirst*, *ver. 35.* Desires they have, earnest desires, but those so suitably, so seasonably, so abundantly satisfied, that they cannot be called hunger and thirst, which is uneasy and painful. Those that did eat manna, and drank of the rock, hungered and thirsted afterwards: Manna surfeited them, water out of the rock failed them, but there is such an *overflowing fulness* in Christ, as can never be *exhausted*, and such *ever-flowing communications* from him as can never be interrupted.

2. They shall *never die*, not die eternally; for, (1.) He that believeth on Christ *hath everlasting life*, *ver. 47.* he hath the assurance of it, the grant of it, the earnest of it; he has it in the promise and first fruits. Union with Christ, and communion with God in Christ is *everlasting life* begun. (2.) Whereas they that did *eat manna* died, Christ is such bread as a man may eat of and never die, *ver. 49, 50.* Observe here,

1. The insufficiency of the typical manna; *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.* There may be much good use made of the death of our fathers; their graves speak to us, and their monuments are our memorials, particularly of this, that the greatest *plenty* of the most *dainty* food, will neither

prolong the thread of life, nor put by the stroke of death. Those that did eat manna, angels food, yet died like other men: There could be nothing amiss in their diet to shorten their days; nor could their deaths be hastened by the toils and fatigues of life, for they neither sowed nor reaped, and yet they died. (1.) Many of them died by the immediate strokes of God's vengeance for their unbelief and murmurings; for *though they did eat that spiritual meat*, yet with many of them God was *not well-pleased*, but they were *overthrown in the wilderness*, *1 Cor. x. 3, 4, 5.* Their eating manna was no security to them from the *wrath of God*, as believing in Christ is to us. (2.) The rest of them died in a course of nature, and their carcasses fell under a divine sentence, in that wilderness where they did *eat manna*. In that very age when miracles were *daily bread*, was the life of man reduced to the stint it now stands at, as appears, *Psal. xc. 10.* Let them not boast so much of *manna* then.

2. The all-sufficiency of the true *manna*, of which the other was a type; *This is the bread that cometh down from heaven*, that truly divine and heavenly food, *that a man may eat thereof and not die*, i. e. not fall under the wrath of God, which is killing to the soul; *not die* the second death; no, nor the first death finally and irrecoverably; *not die*, i. e. not perish, not come short of the heavenly Canaan, as the Israelites did of the earthly, for want of *faith*, though they had *manna*.

This is further explained by that promise in the next words, *If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever*, *ver. 53.* That is the meaning of his *never dying*; though he go down to death, he shall pass through it to that world where there shall be *no more death*. To *live for ever*, is not to *be* for ever, (the damned in hell shall *be* for ever; the soul of man was made for an endless state) but to be *happy* for ever. And because the body must needs die, and be as water spilt upon the ground, Christ here undertakes for the gathering of that up too, as before, *ver. 44.* *I will raise him up at the last day*; and even that shall live for ever.

3. He shews what encouragements we have to believe in Christ. Christ here speaks of some who *had seen him*, and yet *believed not*, *ver. 36.* They saw his person and miracles, and heard him preach, and yet were not wrought upon to believe in him. Faith is not always the effect of sight; the soldiers were eye-witnesses of his resurrection, and yet instead of *believing* in him, *belyed* him; so that it is a difficult thing to bring people to believe in Christ: And by the operation of the Spirit of grace, those that *have not seen*, yet *have believed*.

Two things we are here assured of to encourage our faith.

1. That the Son will bid all those welcome that come to him, *ver. 37.* *Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.* How welcome should this world be to our souls, which bids us welcome to Christ? *Him that comes*, it is in the singular number, speaking favour, not only to the body of believers in general, but to every particular soul that applies itself to Christ. Here, 1. The duty required is a pure gospel duty; to *come to Christ* that we may come to God by him. His beauty and love, those great attractives, must *draw* us to him; sense of need, and fear of danger, must *drive* us to him; any thing to bring us to Christ. 2. The promise is a pure gospel promise, *I will in no wise cast out*, *ἐ μὴ ἐκβάλω ἔξω*; there are two negatives, *I will not, no, I will not.* 1. Much favour is expressed here. We have reason to fear that he should *cast us out*; considering our meanness, our vileness, our unworthiness to come, our weakness in coming, we may justly expect that he should frown upon us, and shut his doors against us; but he obviates these fears with this assurance, he *will not* do it; will not disdain us though we are mean, will not reject us though we are sinful. Do poor scholars come to him to be taught? Though they be dull and slow he will not *cast them out*. Do poor patients come to him to be cured? Poor clients come to him to be *advised*? Though their case be bad, and though they come empty handed, he will *in no wise cast them out*. But, 2. More favour is implied than is expressed; when it is said he will not cast them out, the meaning is, he will receive them, and entertain them, and give them all that which they come to him for: As he will not refuse them at their first coming, so he will not afterwards upon every displeasure cast them out. His *gifts and callings are without repentance*.

2. That the Father will, without fail, bring all those to him in due time that were given him. In the *federal transactions* between the Father and the Son, relating to *man's redemption*, as the Son undertook for the justification, sanctification, and salvation of all that should come to him; let me have them put into my hands, and then leave the management of them to me; so the Father, the fountain and original of being, life and grace, undertook to put into his hand all that were given him, and bring them to him.

Now, 1. He here assures us that this shall be done, *ver. 37.* *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me.* Christ had complained, *ver. 36.* of those, who though they had *seen* him, yet would not *believe* on him; and then he adds this, (1.) For their conviction and awakening, plainly intimating, that their not coming to him, and believing on him, if they persisted in it,



would be a certain sign that they did not belong to the election of grace; for how can we think that God gave us to Christ, if we give ourselves to the world and the flesh? 2 Pet. i. 10. (2.) For his own comfort and encouragement; *though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious. The election has obtained, and shall, though multitudes be blinded, Rom. xi. 7. Though he lose many of his creatures, yet none of his charge; All that the Father gives him, shall come to him notwithstanding. Here we have,*

1. The election described; *All that the Father giveth me, πάντες οὗ δίδωμι, every thing which the Father gives to me. The persons of the elect, and all that belongs to them; all their services, all their interests; as all that he hath is theirs, so all that they have is his, and he speaks of them as his all: They were given him in full recompence of his undertaking. Not only all persons, but all things are gathered together in Christ, Eph. i. 10. and reconciled, Col. i. 20. The giving of the chosen remnant to Christ is spoken of, ver. 39. as a thing done, he hath given them; here it is spoken of as a thing in the doing, he giveth them; because, when the first-begotten was brought into the world, it should seem there was a renewal of the grant; see Heb. x. 5, &c. God was now about to give him the beathen for his inheritance, Psal. ii. 8. to put him in possession of the desolate heritages, Isa. xlix. viii. to divide him a portion with the great, Isa. liii. 12. And though the Jews, who saw him, believed not on him, yet these (saith he) shall come to me; the other sheep which are not of this fold shall be brought, John x. 15. see Acts xiii. 45—48.*

2. The effect of it secured; *they shall come to me.* This is not in the nature of a promise, but a prediction, that as many as were in the counsel of God ordained to life, shall be brought to life, by being brought to Christ. They are scattered, are mingled among the nations, yet none of them shall be forgotten, not a grain of God's corn shall be lost, as is promised, Amos ix. 9. They are by nature alienated from Christ, and averse to him, and yet *they shall come.* As God's omniscience is engaged for the finding of them all out, so is his omnipotence for the bringing of them all in. Not they shall be driven to me, but they shall come freely, shall be made willing.

2. He here acquaints us how it shall be done. How shall those who are given to Christ be brought to him? Two things are to be done in order to it.

1. Their understandings shall be enlightened; that is promised, ver. 45, 46. It is written in the prophets, who spake of these things before, *And they shall be all taught of God; this we find, Isa. liv. 13. and Jer. xxxi. 34. They shall all know me.* Note, In order to our believing in Jesus Christ, it is necessary that we be taught of God; that is (1.) That there be a divine revelation made to us, discovering to us both what we are to believe concerning Christ, and why we are to believe it. There are some things which even nature teacheth, but to bring us to Christ there is need of a higher light. (2.) That there be a divine work wrought in us, enabling us to understand and receive these revealed truths, and the evidence of them. God, in giving us reason, teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth; but in giving us faith, he teacheth us more than the natural man. Thus all the church's children, all that are genuine, are taught of God; he hath undertaken their education.

It follows then by way of inference from this, that every man that has heard and learned of the Father, comes to Christ, ver. 45. (1.) It is here implied, that none will come to Christ but those that have heard, and learned of the Father: We shall never be brought to Christ but under a divine conduct; except God, by his grace, enlighten our minds, inform our judgments, and rectify our mistakes; and not only tell us that we may hear, but teach us that we may learn the truth as it is in Jesus, we shall never be brought to believe in Christ. (2.) That this divine teaching doth so necessarily produce the faith of God's elect, that we may conclude that those who do not come to Christ, have never heard, or learned of the Father, for if they had, doubtless they would have come to Christ. In vain do men pretend to be taught of God, if they believe not in Christ, for he teacheth no other lesson, Gal. i. 8, 9. See how God deals with men as reasonable creatures, draws them with the cords of a man, opens the understanding first, and then by that, in a regular way, influenceth the inferiour faculties; thus he comes in by the door, but Satan, as a robber, climbs up another way.

But lest any should dream of a visible appearance of God the Father to the children of men, to teach them these things, and entertain any gross conceptions about hearing and learning of the Father, he adds, ver. 46. *Not that any man hath seen the Father,* it is implied, nor can see him with bodily eyes, or may expect to learn of him as Moses did, to whom he spake face to face; but God, in enlightening mens eyes, and teaching them works in a spiritual way. The Father of spirits hath access to, and influence upon mens spirits undiscerned. Those that have not seen his face, have felt his power. And yet there is one intimately acquainted with the Father, he which is of God, i. e. Christ himself, he hath seen the Father, John i. 18. Note, 1. Jesus Christ is of God in a peculiar manner, God of God, light of light; not only sent of God, but begotten of God before all worlds.

2. It is the prerogative of Christ to have seen the Father, perfectly to know him and his counsels. 3. Even that illumination which is preparative to faith, is conveyed to us through Christ. Those that learn of the Father, forasmuch as they cannot see him themselves, must learn of Christ, who alone hath seen him. As all divine discoveries are made through Christ, so through him all divine powers are exerted.

2. Their wills shall be bowed. If the soul of man had now its original rectitude, there needed no more to influence the will, but the illumination of the understanding; but in the depraved soul of fallen man, there is a rebellion of the will against the right dictates of the understanding; a carnal mind, which is enmity itself to the divine light and law: it is therefore requisite that there be a work of grace wrought upon the will, which is here called drawing; ver. 44. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.* The Jews murmured at the doctrine of Christ, not only would not receive it themselves, but were angry that others did; Christ overheard their secret whisperings, and said, ver. 43. *Murmur not among yourselves; lay not the fault of your dislike of my doctrine one upon another, as if it is because you find it generally distasteful; no, it is long of yourselves, and your own corrupt dispositions, which are such as amount to a moral impotency; your antipathies to the truths of God, and prejudices against them are so strong, that nothing less than a divine power can conquer them. And this is the case of all mankind; no man can come to me, can persuade himself to come up to the terms of the gospel, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, ver. 44.*

Observe, 1. The nature of the work, it is drawing, which speaks not a force put upon the will, but a change wrought in the will, whereby of unwilling we are made willing, and a new bias given to the soul by which it inclines to God. This seems to be more than a moral swasion, for by that it is in the power of man to draw; yet it is not to be called a physical impulse, for it lies out of the road of nature; but he that formed the spirit of man within him by his creating power, and fashioneth the hearts of men by his providential influence, knows how to new mould the soul, and to alter its bent and temper, and make it conformable to himself, and his own will, without doing any wrong to its natural liberty. It is such a drawing as works not only a compliance, but a cheerful compliance, a complacency; *draw us and we will run after thee.*

2. The necessity of it; *no man in this weak and helpless state can come to Christ without it.* As we cannot do any natural action without the concurrence of common providence, so we cannot do any action morally good, without the influence of special grace, in which the new man lives, and moves, and has its being, as much as the meer man has in the divine providence.

3. The author of it; *the Father which hath sent me.* The Father having sent Christ will succeed him, for he would not send him on a fruitless errand. Christ having undertaken to bring souls to glory, God promised him in order thereunto, to bring them to him, and so to give him possession of those whom he had given him a right to. God having by promise given the kingdom of Israel to David, did at length draw the hearts of the people to him; so having sent Christ to save souls, he sends souls to him to be saved by him.

4. The crown and perfection of this work; and *I will raise him up at the last day.* This is four times mentioned in this discourse, and doubtless it includes all the intermediate, and preparatory workings of divine grace. When he raises them up at the last day, he will put the last hand to his undertaking, will bring forth the topstone. If he undertake this, sure he can do any thing, and will do every thing that is necessary in order to it. Let our expectations be carried out towards a happiness reserved for the last day, when all the years of time shall be fully complete and ended.

Thirdly, Christ having thus spoken of himself as the bread of life, and of faith as the work of God, comes more particularly to shew, what of himself is this bread, viz. his flesh, and that to believe, is to eat of that, ver. 51—58. where he still prosecutes the metaphor of food. Observe,

1. The preparation of this food; *The bread that I will give is my flesh, ver. 51. The flesh of the Son of man, and his blood, ver. 53. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, ver. 55.*

2. The participation of this food; we must eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ver. 53. and again, ver. 54. *Who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood;* and the same words, ver. 56, 57. he that eateth me. This is certainly a parable, or figurative discourse, wherein the actings of the soul, upon things spiritual and divine are represented by bodily actions about things sensible; which made the truths of Christ more intelligible to some, and less so to others, Mark iv. 12. Now let us see,

1. How this discourse of Christ was liable to mistake and misconstruction, that men might see and not perceive.

(1.) It was misconstrued by the carnal Jews, to whom it was first delivered, ver. 52. *They strove among themselves; they whispered in each other's ears their dissatisfaction, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Christ spoke, ver. 51. of giving his flesh*



for us to suffer and die, but they without due consideration, understood it of his giving it to us to be eaten, which gave occasion to Christ to tell them, that however, what he had said was otherwise intended, yet even that also of *eating his flesh*, was no such absurd thing, if rightly understood, as *prima facie* they took it to be.

(2.) It has been wretchedly misconstrued by the church of Rome, for the support of their monstrous doctrine of Transubstantiation, which gives the lye to our senses, contradicts the nature of a sacrament, and overthrows all convincing evidence. They, like these Jews here, understand it of a corporal and carnal eating of Christ's body, like Nicodemus, *John* iii. 4. The Lord's supper was not yet instituted, and therefore it could have no reference to that; it is a *spiritual* eating and drinking that is here spoken of, not a *sacramental*.

(3.) It is misunderstood by many ignorant, carnal people, who from hence infer, that if they take the sacrament when they die, they shall certainly go to heaven; which as it makes many, that are weak, causelessly uneasy if they want it, so it makes many, that are wicked, causelessly easy if they have it. Let us see therefore,

2. How this discourse of Christ's is to be understood.

1. What is meant by the *flesh and blood of Christ*. It is called, *ver. 53. The flesh of the Son of man, and his blood, his* as Messiah and Mediator: the *flesh and blood* which he assumed in his incarnation, *Heb. ii. 14.* and which he gave up in his death and sufferings; *my flesh which I will give* to be crucified and slain. It is said to be given for the life of the world, i. e. 1. Instead of the life of the world which was forfeited by sin, Christ gives his own flesh as a ransom or counter-price. Christ was our bail, bound body for body (as we say) and therefore his life must go for ours, that ours may be spared: *Here am I, let these go their way.* 2. In order to the life of the world, to purchase a general offer of eternal life to all the world, and the special assurances of it to all believers. So that the *flesh and blood* of the Son of man, is the redeemer incarnate, and dying; it is Christ and him crucified, and the redemption wrought out by him, with all the precious benefits of redemption; pardon of sin, acceptance with God, the adoption of sons, access to the throne of grace, the promises of the covenant, and eternal life; these are called the *flesh and blood* of Christ. (1.) Because they are purchased by his flesh and blood, by the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood. Well may the purchased privileges be denominated from the price that was paid for them, for it puts a value upon them; write upon them *pretium sanguinis*. (2.) Because they are meat and drink to our souls. *Flesh with the blood* was prohibited, *Gen. ix. 4.* but the privileges of the gospel are as flesh and blood to us, prepared for the nourishment of our souls. He had before compared himself to bread, which is necessary food; here to *flesh*, which is delicious. It is a *feast of fat things*, *Isa. xxv. 6.* The soul is satisfied with Christ as with *marrow and fatness*, *Psal. lxxiii. 5.* It is *meat indeed*, and *drink indeed*; truly so, i. e. spiritually, so Dr. Whitby; as Christ is called the *true vine*, or *truly meat*, in opposition to the shews and shadows with which the world shams off those that feed upon it. In Christ and his gospel there is real supply, and solid satisfaction; that is *meat indeed*, and *drink indeed*, which satiates and replenisheth, *Jer. xxxi. 25, 26.*

2. What is meant by *eating this flesh*, and *drinking this blood*, which is so necessary and beneficial; it is certain it means neither more nor less than *believing* in Christ. As we partake of meat and drink by eating and drinking, so we partake of Christ and his benefits by faith: And *believing in Christ* includes these four things, which *eating and drinking* doth. (1.) It implies an *appetite* to Christ. This spiritual eating and drinking begins with *hungering and thirsting*, *Matt. v. 6.* earnest and importunate desires after Christ, not willing to take up with any thing short of an interest in him: give me Christ or else I die. (2.) An *application* of Christ to our selves. Meat looked upon will not nourish us, but meat fed upon, and so made our own, and as it were *one with us*. We must so accept of Christ as to appropriate him to our selves; *my Lord and my God*, *John xx. 28.* (3.) A *delight* in Christ and his salvation. The doctrine of Christ crucified must be *meat and drink* to us, most pleasant and delightful. We must feast upon the dainties of the *New Testament in the blood of Christ*, taking as great a complacency in the methods which infinite wisdom has taken to redeem and save us, as ever we did in the most needful supplies, or grateful delights of nature. (4.) A *derivation of nourishment* from him, and a dependence upon him for the support and comfort of our spiritual life, and the strength, growth, and vigour of the new man. To feed upon Christ, is to do all in his name, in union with him, and by virtue drawn from him; it is to live upon him, as we do upon our meat. How our bodies are nourished by our food we cannot describe, but that they are so we know and find, so it is with this spiritual nourishment. Our Saviour was so well pleased with this metaphor, as very significant and expressive, that when afterward he would institute some outward sensible signs, by which to represent our communicating of the benefits of his death, he chose those of *eating and drinking*, and made them *sacramental* actions.

Having thus explained the general meaning of this part of Christ's discourse, the particulars are reducible to two heads.

1. The necessity of our feeding upon Christ, *ver. 53. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* That is, 1. It is a certain sign you have no spiritual life in you, if you have no desire towards Christ, nor delight in him. If the soul doth not *hunger and thirst*, certainly it doth not live: It is a sign we are dead indeed, if we are dead to such meat and drink as this. When artificial bees, that by curious springs were made to move to and fro, were to be distinguished from natural ones, (they say) it was done by putting honey among them, which the natural bees only flocked to, but the artificial ones minded it not, for they had no life in them. 2. It is certain you can have no spiritual life, unless you derive it from Christ by faith; separated from him you can do nothing. Faith in Christ is the *primum vivens*, the first living principle of grace; without it we have not the truth of spiritual life, nor any title to eternal life: our bodies may as well live without meat, as our souls without Christ.

2. The benefit and advantage of it, in two things.

1. We shall be *one with Christ*, as our bodies are with our food when it is digested; *ver. 56. He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, that lives by faith in Christ crucified*, (it is spoken of as a continued act) he dwelleth in me, and I in him. By faith we have a close and intimate union with Christ; he is in us, and we in him, *Job xvii. 21, 22, 23.* 1 *John* iii. 24. Believers dwell in Christ as their strong hold, or city of refuge; Christ dwells in them as the master of the house, to rule it, and provide for it. Such is the union between Christ and believers, that he shares in their griefs, and they share in his graces and joys; he sups with them upon their bitter herbs, and they with him upon his rich dainties. It is an inseparable union, like that between the body and the digested food, *Rom. viii. 35.* 1 *John* iv. 13.

2. We shall live, shall live eternally by him, as our bodies live by our food. (1.) We shall live by him; *ver. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.* We have here the series and order of the divine life. (1.) God is the living Father, hath life in, and of himself: *I am that I am* is his name for ever. (2.) Jesus Christ as Mediator lives by the Father; he has life in himself, *John v. 26.* but he has it of the Father; he that sent him, not only qualified him with that life which was necessary to so great an undertaking, but constituted him the treasury of divine life to us; breathed into the second Adam the breath of spiritual lives, as into the first Adam the breath of natural lives. (3.) True believers receive this divine life by virtue of their union with Christ, which is inferred from the union between the Father and the Son, as it is compared to it, *John xvii. 21.* for therefore he that eateth me, or feeds on me, even he shall live by me: Those that live upon Christ shall live by him. The life of believers is had from Christ, *John i. 16.* it is hid with Christ, *Col. iii. 4.* we live by him as the members by the head, the branches by the root; because he lives, we shall live also. (2.) We shall live eternally by him. *Ver. 54. Who so eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, as it is prepared in the gospel to be the food of souls, he hath eternal life, he hath it now; as ver. 40. he hath that in him which is eternal life begun; he has the earnest and foretaste of it, and the hope of it; he shall live for ever, ver. 54. His happiness shall run parallel with the longest line of eternity itself.*

The historian concludes with an account where Christ had this discourse with the Jews, *ver. 59. In the synagogue, as he taught*, implying, that he taught them many other things besides these, but this was that in his discourse which was new. He adds this, that he said these things in the synagogue, to shew, (1.) The credit of Christ's doctrine. His truths sought no corners, but were publicly preached in mixed assemblies, as able to abide the most severe and impartial test. Christ pleaded this upon his trial, *John xviii. 20. I ever taught in the synagogue.* (2.) The credibility of his narrative of it. To assure you that the discourse was fairly represented, he appeals to the synagogue at Capernaum, where it might be examined.

60. Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying, who can hear it? 61. When Jesus knew in himself, that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62. What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63. It is the spirit that quickneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66. ¶ From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68. Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou



thou hast the words of eternal life. 69. And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God. 70. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71. He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

We have here an account of the effect of Christ's discourse, some were offended, and others edified by it; some driven from him, and others brought nearer to him.

First, To some it was a *favour of death unto death*, not only to the Jews, who were professed enemies to him and his doctrine, but even to many of his disciples, such as were disciples at large, that were his frequent hearers, and followed him in publick; a mixed multitude, like those among Israel, that began all the contents. Now here we have,

1. Their murmurings at the doctrine they heard, *ver. 60.* not a few, but many of them were offended at it. Of the several sorts of ground that received the seed, only one in four brought forth fruit. See what they say to it, *ver. 60.* *This is a hard saying, who can hear it?* 1. They do not like it themselves, what stuff is this? *Eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man?* If it be understood figuratively, it is not intelligible; if literally, not practicable. What! must they turn Cannibals? Can they not be religious but they must be barbarous? *Si Christi stanti adorant quod comedunt* (said Averroes) *sic anima mea cum philosophis.* Now, when they found it a hard saying, if they had humbly begged of Christ to have declared unto them this parable, he would have opened it, and their understandings too, for the meek will be teach his way; but they were not willing to have Christ's sayings explained to them, because they would not lose this pretence for rejecting them, that they were hard sayings. 2. They think it impossible any one else should like it, *Who can hear it?* Surely none can. Thus the scoffers at religion are ready to undertake, that all the intelligent part of mankind concur with them; they conclude with great assurance that no man of sense will admit the doctrine of Christ, nor any man of spirit submit to his laws; because they cannot bear to be so tutored, so tied up themselves, they think none else can; *who can hear it?* Thanks be to God, thousands have heard these sayings of Christ, and have found them not only easy but pleasant, as their necessary food.

2. Christ's animadversions upon their murmurings.

1. He well enough knew their murmurings, *ver. 61.* Their cavils were secret in their own breasts, or whispered among themselves in a corner. But, 1. Christ knew them, he saw them, he heard them. Note, Christ takes notice not only of the bold and open *defiances* that are done to his name and glory by daring sinners, but of the secret slights that are put upon his doctrine by carnal professors; he knows that which the *feel faith in his heart*, and cannot for shame speak out; he observes how his doctrine is *resented* by those to whom it is preached; who rejoice in it, and who murmur at it; who are reconciled to it, and bow before it; and who quarrel with it, and rebel against it, though never so secretly. 2. He knew it in himself, not by any information given him, or any external indication of the thing, but by his own divine omniscience. He knew it, not as the prophets, by a *divine revelation* made to him. That which the prophets desired to know was sometimes hid from them, as 2 Kings iv. 27. but by a *divine knowledge* in him. He is that essential word that *discerns the thoughts of the heart*, Heb. iv. 12, 13. Thoughts are words to Christ, we should therefore take heed not only what we say and do, but what we think.

2. He well enough knew how to answer them. *Doth this offend you?* Is this a stumbling block to you? See how people by their own wilful mistakes create offences to themselves: They take offence where there is none given, and make it even there where there is nothing to make it of. Note, We may justly wonder that so much offence should be taken at the doctrine of Christ for so little cause. Christ speaks of it here with wonder, *Doth this offend you?* How unreasonable are your quarrels?

Now in answer to those who condemned his doctrine as intricate and obscure (*Si non vis intelligi, debes negligi*).

1. He gives them a hint of his ascension into heaven, as that which would give an irresistible evidence of the truth of his doctrine, *ver. 62.* *What, and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?* And what then? 1. If I should tell you of that, surely it would much more offend you, and you would think my pretensions too high indeed. If this be so hard a saying that you cannot bear it, how will you digest it when I tell you of my returning to heaven, from whence I came down? See John iii. 13. Those who stumble at smaller difficulties, should consider how they will get over greater. 2. When you see the Son of man ascend, this will much more offend you, for then my body will be less capable of being eaten by you in that gross sense wherein you now understand it; so Dr. Whitby. Or, 3. When you see that, or hear it from those that shall see it, surely then you will be satisfied. You think I take too much

upon me, when I say, *I came down from heaven*, for that was it you quarrelled with, *ver. 42.* but will you think so when you see me return to heaven. If he *ascended*, certainly he *descended*, Eph. iv. 9, 10. Christ did often refer himself thus to subsequent proofs, as John i. 50, 51. — ii. 14. Mat. xii. 40. — xxvi. 64. Let us wait a while till the mystery of God shall be finished, and then we shall see there was no reason to be offended at any of Christ's sayings.

2. He gives them a general key to this, and all such parabolical discourses, teaching them that they are to be understood spiritually, and not after a corporal and carnal manner; *ver. 63.* *It is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profiteth nothing.* As it is in the natural body, the animal spirits quicken and enliven it, and without these the most nourishing food would profit nothing; what would the body be the better for bread, if it were not quickened and animated by the spirit, so it is with the soul. 1. The bare participation of ordinances, unless the Spirit of God work with them, and quicken the soul by them, *profiteth nothing*; the word and ordinances, if the Spirit work with them, are as food to a living man, if not, they are as food to a dead man. Even the flesh of Christ, the sacrifice for sin, will avail us nothing unless the blessed Spirit quicken our souls thereby, and enforce the powerful influences of his death upon us, till we by his grace are planted together in the likeness of it. 2. The doctrine of eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, if it be understood literally, *profits nothing*, but rather leads us into mistakes and prejudices; but the spiritual sense and meaning of it quickens the soul, makes it alive, and lively, for so it follows, *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* To eat the flesh of Christ is a hard saying, but to believe that Christ died for me, and to derive from that doctrine strength and comfort in my approaches to God, my oppositions of sin, and preparations for a future state; this is the *spirit and life* of that saying, and construing it thus it is an excellent saying. The reason why men *mistake* Christ's sayings, is because they *mistake* them. The literal sense of a parable doth us no good, we are never the wiser for it, but the spiritual meaning is instructive. 3. *The flesh*, i. e. those that are in the flesh, (so some understand it) that are under the power of a carnal mind, they *profit nothing* by Christ's discourses; but the Spirit, i. e. those that have the Spirit, that are spiritual, they are quickened and enlivened by them, for they are received *ad modum recipientis*. They found fault with Christ's sayings, whereas the fault was in themselves; it is only to *sensual* minds that spiritual things are *senseless* and *sapless*, spiritual minds *relish* them, see 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.

3. He gives them an intimation of his knowledge of them, and that he had expected no better from them, though they called themselves his disciples, *ver. 64, 65.* Now was fulfilled that of the prophet, speaking of Christ and his doctrine, *Isa. liii. 1.* *Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Both these Christ here takes notice of.

(1.) They did not believe his report. There are some of you, who said you would leave all to follow me, who yet believe not; and this was the reason why the word preached did not profit them, because it was not mixed with faith, Heb. iv. 2. They did not believe him to be the Messiah, else they would have acquiesced in the doctrine he preached, and not have quarrelled with it, though there were some things in it dark and hard to be understood. *Opertet discipulum credere.* Young beginners in learning must take things upon their teachers word. Note, 1. Among those who are nominal Christians, there are many that are real infidels. 2. The unbelief of hypocrites, before it discovers itself to the world, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He knew from the beginning who they were of the multitudes that followed him, that believed, and who of the twelve should betray him; he knew from the beginning of their acquaintance with him, and attendance on him, when they were in the hottest pang of their zeal, who were sincere as Nathanael, John i. 47. and who were not. Before they distinguished themselves by an overt-act, he could infallibly distinguish who believed, and who did not; whose love was counterfeit, and whose cordial. We may gather hence, 1. That the apostasy of those who have long made a plausible profession of religion, is a certain proof of their constant hypocrisy, and that from the beginning they believed not; but is not a proof of the possibility of the total and final apostasy of any true believers: such revolts are not to be called the fall of real saints, but the discovery of pretended ones; see 1 John ii. 19. *Stella cadens non stella fuit.* 2. That it is Christ's prerogative to know the heart; he knows who they are that believe not, but dissemble in their profession, and yet continues them room in his church, the use of his ordinances, and the credit of his name, and doth not discover them in this world, unless they by their own wickedness discover themselves, because such is the constitution of his visible church, and the discovering day is yet to come; but if we pretend to judge men's hearts, we step into Christ's throne, and anticipate his judgment. We are oft deceived in men, and see cause to change our sentiments of them; but this we are sure of, that Christ knows all men, and his judgment is according to truth.



(2.) The reason why they did not believe his report, was because the *arm of the Lord* was not *revealed* unto them; for, *ver. 65. Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father*, referring to *ver. 44.* Christ therefore could not but know who believed, and who did not, because faith is the gift and work of God, and all his Father's gifts and works could not but be known to him, for they all passed through his hands. There he had said, none could come to him, *except the Father draw him*; here he saith, *except it were given him of my Father*, which shews that God draws souls by giving them grace and strength, and a heart to come; without which, such is the moral impotency of man in his fallen state, he cannot come.

3. We have here their final apostasy from Christ hereupon, *ver. 66. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* When we admit into our minds hard thoughts of the word and works of Christ, and conceive a secret dislike, and are willing to hear insinuations tending to their reproach, we are then *entering into temptation*; it is as the letting forth of water, it is *looking back*, which, if infinite mercy prevent not, will end in *drawing back*; therefore *obsta principiis*, take heed of the beginnings of apostasy.

1. See here the *backsliding* of these disciples. *Many of them went back*, to their houses, and families, and callings, which they had left for a time to follow him; *went back*, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize; *went back*, as Orpah did, to their people, and to their gods, *Ruth i. 15.* They had entered themselves in Christ's school, but they *went back*, did not only play truant for once, but took leave of him and his doctrine for ever. Note, The apostasy of Christ's disciples from him, though really a strange thing, yet has been such a common thing, that we need not think strange at it. Here were *many* that *went back*: It is often so, when some backslide, many backslide with them; the disease is infectious.

2. The occasion of this backsliding. *From that time*, from the time that Christ preached this comfortable doctrine, that he is the *bread of life*, and those who by faith feed upon him shall live *by him*, which, one would think, should have engaged them to cleave the more closely to him, from *that time* they withdrew. Note, The corrupt and wicked heart of man often makes that an occasion of offence, which is indeed matter of the greatest comfort. Christ foresaw that they would thus take offence at what he said, and yet he said it. That which is the undoubted word and truth of Christ, must be faithfully delivered, whoever are offended at it. Mens humours must be captivated to God's word, and not *that* accommodated to mens humours.

3. The degree of their apostasy; *they walked no more with him*, returned no more to him, and attended no more upon his ministry. It is hard for those who have been *once enlightened*, and have *tasted the good word of God*, if they fall away, to *renew them again to repentance*, *Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.*

Secondly, This discourse was to others a *savour of life unto life*. *Many went back*, but thanks be to God all did not; even then the *twelve* stuck to him. Though the *faith of some* be *over-thrown*, yet the *foundation of God stands sure*. Observe here,

1. The affectionate question which Christ put to the twelve, *ver. 67. Will ye also go away?* He saith nothing to them which went back; *If the unbelieving depart let them depart*; it was no great loss of those whom he never had; light come, light go; but he takes this occasion to speak to the twelve, to confirm them, and by trying their steadfastness the more to fix them. *Will ye also go away?* 1. It is *at your choice* whether ye will or no; if ye will forsake me, now is the time when so many do: It is an hour of temptation, if you will go back, go now. Note, Christ will detain none with him against their wills; his soldiers are volunteers, not pressed men. The twelve had now had time enough to try how they liked Christ and his doctrine, and that none of them might afterwards say they were trepanned into discipleship, and if it were to do again they would not do it; he here allows them a power of revocation, and leaves them at their liberty, as *Josh. xxiv. 15. Ruth i. 15.* 2. It is *at your peril*, if you do go away. If there were any secret inclination in the heart of any of them to depart from him now, he stops it with this awakening question, *will you also go away?* Think not that you hang at as loose an end as they did, and may go away as easily as they can. They have not been so intimate with me as you have been, nor received so many favours from me; they are gone, but will you go? Remember your character, and say, whatever others do we will never go away: *Should such a man as I flee?* *Neh. vi. 11.* Note, The nearer we have been to Christ, and the longer we have been with him, the more mercies we have received from him, and the more engagements we have laid ourselves under to him, the greater will be our sin if we desert him. 3. I have reason to think you will not. Will you go away? No, I have faster hold of you than so; *I hope better things of you*, *Heb. vi. 9.* for you are they that have continued with me, *Luke xxii. 28.* When the apostasy of some is a grief to the Lord Jesus, the constancy of others is so much the more his honour, and he is pleased with it accordingly. Christ

and believers know one another too well to part upon every displeasure.

2. The believing reply which Peter, in the name of the rest, made to this question, *ver. 68, 69.* Christ put the question to them, as Joshua put Israel to their choice whom they would serve, with design to draw out from them a promise to adhere to him, and it had the like effect. *Nay, but we will serve the Lord.* Peter was upon all occasions the *mouth of the rest*, not so much because he had more of his Master's ear than they, but because he had more tongue of his own; and what he said was sometimes approved, and sometimes reprimanded, *Matt. xvi. 17, 23.* the common lot of those who are swift to speak. This here was well said, admirably well; and probably he said it by the direction, and with the express assent of his fellow-disciples; at least he knew their mind, and spoke the sense of them all, and did not except Judas, for we must hope the best.

1. Here is a good resolution to adhere to Christ, and so expressed, as to intimate that they would not entertain the least thought of leaving him. *Lord, to whom shall we go?* It were folly to go from thee, unless we knew where to mend ourselves; no, Lord, we like our choice too well to change. Note, Those who leave Christ, would do well to consider whom they will go to, and whether they can expect to find rest and peace any where but in him. See *Psal. lxxiii. 27, 28. Hos. ii. 9. Whether shall we go?* Shall we make our court to the world? It will certainly deceive us; shall we return to sin? It will certainly destroy us; shall we leave the *fountain of living waters* for *broken cisterns*? The disciples resolve to continue their pursuit of life and happiness, and will have a guide to it, and will adhere to Christ as their guide, for they can never have a better. Shall we go to the heathen philosophers, and become their disciples? They are become vain in their imaginations, and professing themselves to be wise in other things, are become fools in religion? Shall we go to the scribes and Pharisees, and sit at their feet? What good can they do us, who have made void the commandments of God by their traditions? Shall we go to Moses? he will send us back again to thee. Therefore, if ever we find the way to happiness, it must be in following thee. Note, Christ's holy religion appears to great advantage, when it is compared with other institutions, for then it will be seen how far it excels them all. Let them who find fault with this religion, before they quit it, find a better. A divine teacher we must have, can we find a better than Christ? A divine revelation we cannot be without, if the scripture be not such a one, where else may we look for it?

2. Here is a good reason for this resolution. It was not the inconsiderate resolve of a blind affection, but the result of mature deliberation. The disciples were resolved never to go away from Christ.

(1.) Because of the *advantage* they promised themselves by him, *Thou hast the words of eternal life.* They themselves did not fully understand Christ's discourse, for as yet the doctrine of the cross was a riddle to them; but in the general they were satisfied that *he had the words of eternal life*, i. e. (1.) That the word of his doctrine shewed the way to *eternal life*, set it before us, and directed us what to do, that we might inherit it. (2.) That the word of his *doom*, and *determination*, must confer eternal life. His *having the words of eternal life*, is the same with his *having power to give eternal life to as many as were given him*, *John xvii. 2.* He had in the foregoing discourse, assured *eternal life* to his followers, these disciples fasten upon that plain saying, and therefore resolved to stick to him, when the other over-looked that, and fastened upon the *hard sayings*, and therefore forsook him. Though we cannot account for every mystery, every obscurity in Christ's doctrine, yet we know in the general it is the word of eternal life, and therefore must live and die by it; for if we forsake Christ, we *forsake our own mercies*.

(2.) Because of the assurance they had concerning him, *ver. 69. We know, and are sure, that thou art that Christ.* If he be the promised Messiah, he must bring in an *everlasting righteousness*, *Dan. ix. 24.* and therefore has the *words of eternal life*, for *righteousness reigns to eternal life*, *Rom. v. 21.* Observe, 1. The doctrine they believed; that this Jesus was the Messiah promised to the fathers, and expected by them, and that he was not a mere man, but the Son of the living God, the same to whom God had said, *Thou art my Son*, *Psal. ii. 7.* In times of temptation to apostasy, it is good to have recourse to our first principles, and stick to them; and if we faithfully abide by that which is *past dispute*, we shall be the better able both to *find* and to *keep* the truth in matters of doubtful disputation. 2. The degree of their faith; it rose up to a full assurance, *we are sure.* We have known it *by experience*, that is the best knowledge. We should take occasion from others wavering, to be so much the more established, especially in that which is the present truth. When we have so strong a faith in the gospel of Christ, as boldly to venture our souls upon it, knowing *whom we have believed*, then, and not till then, we shall be willing to venture every thing else for it.

3. The melancholy remark which our Lord Jesus made upon this reply of Peter's, *ver. 70, 71. Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* And the evangelist tells us who he



meant, *he spake of Judas Iscariot*. Peter had undertaken for them all, that they would be tight to their Master. Now Christ doth not condemn his charity, it is always good to hope the best, but he tacitly corrects his confidence. We must not be too sure concerning any. God knows them that are his, we do not. Observe here,

1. Hypocrites and betrayers of Christ are no better than devils. Judas not only *had* a devil, but he *was* a devil. One of you is a *false accuser*, so *διαβολος* sometimes signifies, 1 Tim. iii. 11. and it is probable that Judas, when he sold his Master to the chief priests, represented him to them as an ill man, to justify himself in what he did. But I rather take it as we read it, *He is a devil*; a devil incarnate; a fallen apostle, as the devil a fallen angel. He is Satan, an adversary, an enemy to Christ. He is Abaddon, and Apollyon, a son of perdition. He was of his father the devil, did his lusts, was in his interests, as Cain, 1 John iii. 12. Those whose bodies were possessed by the devil, are never called *devils* (demoniacs, but not devils) but Judas, into whose heart Satan entered and filled it, is called a *devil*.

2. Many that are *seeming* saints are *real* devils. Judas had as fair an out-side as many of the apostles, his venom was like that of the serpent, covered with a fine skin. He *cast out devils*, and appeared an enemy to the devil's kingdom, and yet himself a devil all the while. Not only he *will be* one shortly, but he *is* one now. It is *strange*, and to be admired, Christ speaks of it with wonder, *Have not I?* It is *sad*, and to be lamented, that ever Christianity should be made a cloke to diabolism.

3. The disguises of hypocrites, however they may deceive men, and put a cheat upon them, cannot deceive Christ, for his piercing eye sees through them. He can call those *devils* that call themselves *Christians*, like the prophets greeting to Jeroboam's wife, when she came to him in masquerade, 1 Kings xiv. 6. *Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam*. Christ's *divine sight*, far better than any *double sight*, can see spirits.

4. There are those who are chosen by Christ to special services, that yet prove false to him. *I have chosen you to the apostleship*, for it is expressly said, Judas was not chosen to eternal life, John xiii. 18. and yet one of *you* is a devil. Note, Advancement to places of honour and trust in the church, is no certain evidence of saving grace. *We have prophesied in thy name*.

5. In the most *select* societies on this side heaven, it is no new thing to meet with those that are corrupt. Of the twelve that were chosen to an intimate conversation with an *incarnate deity*, as great an honour and privilege as ever men were chosen to, one was an *incarnate devil*. The historian lays an emphasis upon this, that Judas was *one of the twelve*, that were so dignified and distinguished. Let us not therefore reject and unchurch the twelve, because *one of them is a devil*, nor say they are all cheats and hypocrites, because one of them was so; let those that are so bear the blame, and not those, who while they are undiscovered, incorporate with them. There is a society within the veil, into which no unclean thing shall enter; a church of first-born, in which are no *false brethren*.

## C H A P. VII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's declining for some time to appear publickly in Judea, ver. 1. (2.) His design to go up to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, and his discourse with his kindred in Galilee, concerning his going up to this feast, ver. 3—13. (3.) His preaching publickly in the temple at that feast. 1. In the midst of the feast, ver. 14, 15. we have his discourse with the Jews, (1.) Concerning his doctrine, ver. 16—18. (2.) Concerning the crime of sabbath-breaking laid to his charge, ver. 19—24. (3.) Concerning himself, both whence he came, and whither he was going, ver. 25—36. 2. On the last day of the feast, (1.) His gracious invitation to poor souls to come to him, ver. 37—39. (2.) The reception that it met with. 1. Many of the people disputed about it, ver. 40—44. 2. The chief priests would have brought him into trouble for it, but were first balked by their officers, ver. 45—49. and then silenced by one of their own court, ver. 50—53.

1. **A**FTER these things, Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2. Now the Jews feast of tabernacles was at hand. 3. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou dost. 4. For *there is no man that doth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly*: If thou do

these things, shew thy self to the world. 5. For neither did his brethren believe in him. 6. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. 7. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come. 9. When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee. 10. ¶ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, where is he? 12. And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. 13. Howbeit, no man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

We have here,

1. The reason given why Christ spent more of his time in Galilee than in Judea, ver. 1. *because the Jews*, the people in Judea and Jerusalem sought to *kill him*, for curing the impotent man on the sabbath-day, John v. 16. They thought to be the death of him, either by a popular tumult, or by a legal prosecution; in consideration of this, he kept at a distance in another part of the country, very much out of the lines of Jerusalem's communication: It is not said, he *durst not*, but he *would not* walk in Jewry; it was not through fear and cowardise that he declined it, but in *prudence*, because his hour was not yet come. Note, 1. Gospel-light is justly *taken away* from those that endeavour to extinguish it, and blow it out. Christ will withdraw from those that drive him from them, and hide his face from those that spit in it, and justly shut up his bowels from those that spurn at them. 2. In times of imminent peril, it is not only *allowable*, but *advisable* to *withdraw* and *abscond* for our own safety and preservation, and to choose the service of those places which are least perilous, Matt. xvi. 23. Then, and not till then, we are called to expose and lay down our lives, when we cannot save them without sin. 3. If the providence of God cast persons of *merit* into places of obscurity, and little note, it must not be thought strange, it was the lot of our Master himself; he who was fit to have sit in the highest of Moses's seats, willingly walked in Galilee among the ordinary sort of people. Observe, He did not sit still in Galilee, nor bury himself alive there, but *walked*; he went about doing good. When we cannot do *what* and *where* we *would*, we must do *what* and *where* we *can*.

2. The approach of the *feast of tabernacles*, ver. 2. one of the three solemnities which called for the personal attendance of all the males at Jerusalem, see the institution of it, Lev. xxiii. 34, &c. and the revival of it after a long disuse, Neh. viii. 14. It was intended to be both a *memorial* of the tabernacle state of Israel in the wilderness, and a *figure* of the tabernacle state of God's spiritual Israel in this world. This feast, which was instituted so many hundred years before, was still religiously observed. Note, Divine institutions are never antiquated, nor go out of date by length of time; nor must wilderness mercies ever be forgotten. But it is called the *Jews feast*, because it was now shortly to be *abolished*, as a mere Jewish thing, and left to them that *served the tabernacle*.

3. Christ's discourse with his *brethren*; some of his kindred, whether by his mother, or his supposed father, is not certain; but they were such as pretended to have an interest in him, and therefore interposed to advise him in his conduct. And observe,

1. Their ambition and vain-glory in urging him to make a more publick appearance than he did. *Depart hence* (said they) *and go into Judea*, ver. 3. where thou wilt make a better figure than thou canst here. Two reasons they give for this advice.

1. That it would be an encouragement to those in and about Jerusalem, who had a respect for him; for expecting his temporal kingdom, the royal seat, of which they concluded must be at Jerusalem, they would have disciples *there*, to be particularly countenanced, and thought the time he spent among his Galilean disciples, wasted and thrown away, and his miracles turning to no account unless they at Jerusalem saw them. Or, that *thy disciples*, i. e. all of them in general, who will be gathered at Jerusalem to keep the feast, may *see thy works*, and not as here, a few at one time, and a few at another.

2. That it would be for the advancing of his own name and honour; *There is no man that doth any thing in secret*, if he himself *seeks to be known openly*. They take it for granted, that Christ sought to make known himself, and therefore thought it absurd for him to conceal his miracles; *If thou do these things*, if thou be so well able to gain the applause of the people, and the approbation of the rulers, by thy miracles, venture abroad, and *shew thy self to the world*. Supported with these credentials, thou canst not fail of acceptance, and therefore it is high time to set up for an interest, and think of being *great*.



Now one would not think there were any harm in this, and yet the evangelist notes it as an evidence of their infidelity, for *neither did his brethren believe in him*, ver. 5. if they had, they would not have said this. Observe, (1.) It was an honour to be of the kindred of Christ, but no *saving* honour; they that hear his word, and keep it, are the kindred he values. Sure grace runs in no blood in the world, when not in that of Christ's family. (2.) It was a sign Christ did not aim at any secular interest, for then his kindred would have struck in with him, and he would have secured them first. (3.) There were those that were a-kin in Christ according to the flesh, who did believe in him, three of the twelve were *his brethren*; and yet others as nearly allied to him as they, did not believe on him. Many that have the same external privileges and advantages, do not make the same use of them.

But what was there amiss in this advice which they gave him? I answer, (1.) It was a piece of presumption for them to prescribe to Christ, and to teach him what measures to take; it was a sign they *did not believe him* able to guide them, when they did not think him sufficient to guide himself. (2.) They discovered a great carelessness of his safety, when they would have him go to Judea, where they knew the Jews sought to kill him. They that believed in him, and loved him, dissuaded him from Judea, *John xi. 8.* (3.) Some think they hoped, that if his miracles were wrought at Jerusalem, the Pharisees and rulers would try them, and discover some cheat in them, which would justify their unbelief. So Dr. Whitby. (4.) Perhaps they were weary of his company in Galilee (*for are not all these that speak Galileans?*) and this was in effect, a desire that he would *depart out of their coasts*. (5.) They causelessly insinuate that he neglected his disciples, and denied them such a *sight of his works*, as was necessary to the support of their faith. (6.) They tacitly reproach him as *mean-spirited*, that he durst not enter the lists with the great men, nor thrust himself upon the stage of publick action, which if he had any thing of courage, and a *great soul*, he would do, and not sneak thus, and sculk in a corner; thus Christ's humility, and his humiliation, and the small figure which his religion has usually made in the world, have been often turned to the reproach both of *him* and *it*. (7.) They seem to question the truth of the miracles he wrought, in saying, *If thou do these things*; if they will bear the test of a publick scrutiny, in the courts above, produce them there. (8.) They think Christ altogether such a one as themselves, as subject as they to the politics of the world, and as desirous as they to *make a fair shew in the flesh*; whereas he sought not honour from men. (9.) Self was at the bottom of all; they hoped, if he would make himself as great as he might, they, being his kinsmen, should share in his honour, and have respect paid them for his sake. Note, 1. Many carnal people go to publick ordinances, to worship at the feast, only to *shew themselves*, and all their care is to make a *good appearance*, to present themselves handsomely to the world. 2. Many that seem to seek Christ's honour, do really therein seek their own, and make it serve a turn for themselves.

2. The prudence and humility of our Lord Jesus, which appeared in his answer to the advice his brethren gave him, ver. 6, 7, 8. Though there were so many base insinuations in it, he answered them mildly. Note, Even that which is said without *reason*, yet should be answered without *passion*; we should learn of our Master to reply with meekness, even to that which is most *impertinent*, and *imperious*; and where it is easy to find much amiss, to seem not to see it, and wink at the affront.

They expected Christ's company with them to the feast, perhaps hoping he would bear their charges. But here,

(1.) He shews the difference between himself and them, in two things.

1. His *time* was *set*, so was not *theirs*. *My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready*. Understand it of the time of his going up to this feast. It was an indifferent thing to them when they went, for they had nothing of moment to do, either where they were to *detain* them *there*, or where they were going to *hasten* them *thither*; but every minute of Christ's time was precious, and had its own particular business allotted to it. He had some work yet to be done in Galilee, before he left the country; in the harmony of the gospels betwixt this *motion* made by his kindred, and his *going up* to this feast, comes in the story of his sending forth the seventy disciples, *Luke x. 1, &c.* which was an affair of very great consequence; his time is *not yet*, for that must be done first. Those that live useless lives have *their time always ready*, they can go and come when they please; but those whose time is filled up with *duty*, will often find themselves *traitened*, and they have *not yet time* for that which others can do at any time. Those that are made the servants of God, as all men are, and that have made themselves the servants of all, as all useful men have, must not expect, nor covet to be *masters of their own time*. The confinement of business is a thousand times better than the liberty of idleness. Or it may be meant of the time of his appearing publicly at Jerusalem; Christ who knows all men, and all things, knew that the best and most proper time, for it would be about the *middle of the feast*. We who are ignorant and short-sighted, are apt to prescribe to him;

and to think he should deliver his people, and so shew himself now, just now; the present time is *our time*, but he is fittest to judge, and it may be, *his time is not yet come*; his people are not yet ready for deliverance, nor his enemies ripe for ruin; let us therefore wait with patience for *his time*, for all he doth will be most glorious in its season.

2. His *life* was *sought*, so was not *theirs*, ver. 7. They in *shewing themselves* to the world, did not expose themselves, *The world cannot hate you*, for ye are *of the world*, its children, its servants, and in with its interests, and no doubt the world will *love its own*; see *John xv. 19*. Unholy souls, whom the holy God *cannot love*, the world that lies in wickedness *cannot hate*; but he in shewing himself to the world, laid himself open to the greatest danger, *for me it hateth*; Christ was not only slighted as inconsiderable in the world, *The world knew him not*, but hated, as if he had been hurtful to the world; thus ill was he requited for his love to the world: reigning sin is a rooted antipathy and enmity to Christ.

But why did the world hate Christ, what evil had he done it? Had he, like Alexander, under colour of conquering it, laid it waste; no, but because (saith he) *I testify of it, that the works of it are evil*. Note, 1. The works of an evil world are *evil works*; as the tree is, so are the fruits: it is a dark world, and an apostate world, and its works works of darkness and rebellion. 2. Our Lord Jesus, both by himself and by his ministers, did, and will both discover and testify against the evil works of this wicked world. 3. It is a great uneasiness, and provocation to the world to be convicted of the evil of its works. It is for the honour of virtue and piety, that those who are impious and vitious, do not care for hearing of it, for their own consciences make them *ashamed* of the turpitude there is in sin, and *afraid* of the punishment that follows *after* sin. 4. Whatever is *pretended*, the *real* cause of the world's enmity to the gospel, is the testimony it bears against sin and sinners. Christ's witnesses by their doctrine and conversation *torment* them that dwell on the earth, and therefore are treated so barbarously, *Rev. xi. 10*. But it is better incur the world's hatred, by our testifying against its wickedness, than gain its good-will, by going down the stream with it.

(2.) He *dismisseth* them, with a design to stay behind for some time in Galilee, ver. 8. *Go ye up to this feast, I go not up yet*.

1. He allows their going to the feast, though they were carnal and hypocritical in it. Note, Even those who go not to holy ordinances with right affections, and sincere intentions, yet must not be hindered or discouraged from going; who knows but they may be wrought upon there. 2. He denies them his company, when they went to the feast, because they were carnal and hypocritical. Those that go to ordinances for ostentation, or to serve some secular purpose, go without Christ, and will speed accordingly. How sad is the condition of that man, though he reckon himself a-kin to Christ, to whom he saith, *Go up* to such an ordinance, *Go pray*, *Go hear the word*, *Go receive the sacrament*, but *I go not up* with thee? *Go thou*, and appear before God, but I will not appear *for thee*, as *Exod. xxxiii. 1, 3*. But if the presence of Christ go not with us, to what purpose should we go up? *Go ye up, I go not up*. When we are going to, and coming from solemn ordinances, it concerns us to be careful what company we *have*, and *choose*, and to avoid that which is vain and carnal, lest the coal of good affections be quenched by corrupt communication. *I go not up yet to this feast*; he doth not say, I will not go up at all, but *not yet*. There may be reason for deferring a particular duty, which yet must not be wholly omitted, or laid aside. See *Numb. ix. 11*. The reason he gives is, *My time is not yet full come*. Note, Our Lord Jesus is very exact and punctual in knowing and keeping his time, and as it was the time *fixed*, so it was the *best* time.

3. Christ's continuance in Galilee till his *full time* was come, ver. 9. He saying these things to them (*ταῦτα δὲ εἰπὼν*) *abode still in Galilee*; because of this discourse, he continued there; for, 1. He would not be influenced by those that advised him to seek honour from men, nor go along with those that put him upon making a figure; he would not seem to countenance the temptation. 2. He would not depart from his own purpose. He had said upon a clear foresight, and mature deliberation, that he would not go up yet to this feast, and therefore he abode still in Galilee. It becomes the followers of Christ thus to be *steady*, and not to *use lightness*.

4. His going up to the feast when his time was come.

Observe, 1. *When* he went. *When his brethren were gone up*. He would not go up *with them*, lest they should have made a noise and disturbance, under pretence of *shewing him to the world*; whereas it agreed both with the prediction, and with his Spirit, not to *strive* or *cry*, or let his voice be heard in the streets, *Isa. xlii. 2*. But he went up *after them*. We may lawfully join in the same religious worships, with those, that yet we should decline an intimate acquaintance and converse with; for the blessing of ordinances depends upon the grace of God, and not upon the grace of our fellow-worshippers. His carnal brethren went up *first*, and then he went. Note, In the external performances of religion, it is possible that formal hypocrites may *get the start* of those that are sincere. Many come *first to the temple*, that are brought



brought thither by vain-glory, and go thence unjustified, as he, *Luke x. 10.* It is not who comes *first* that will be the question, but who comes *fittest*? If we bring our hearts *with us*, it is no matter who gets *before us*.

2. How he went, *ὡς ἐν κρυπτῷ*, as if he were hiding himself. Not openly, but as it were, in secret, rather for fear of giving offence, than of receiving injury. He went up to the feast, because it was an opportunity of honouring God, and doing good, but he went up as it were in secret, because he would not provoke the government. Note, Provided the work of God be done effectually, it is best done when it is done with *least noise*. The kingdom of God needs not come *with observation*, *Luke xvii. 20.* We may do the work of God *privately*, and yet not do it *deceitfully*.

5. The great expectation that there was of him among the Jews at Jerusalem, *ver. 11, 12, 13.* Having formerly come up to the feasts, and signalized himself by the miracles he wrought, he had made himself the subject of much discourse and observation.

1. They could not but think of him, *ver. 11.* The Jews sought him at the feast, and said, *where is he?* (1.) The common people longed to see him there, that they might have their curiosity gratified with the sight of his person and miracles. They did not think it worth while to go to him into Galilee, though if they had, they would not have lost their labour, but they hope the feast will bring him to Jerusalem, and then they shall see him. If an opportunity of acquaintance with Christ come to their door, they can like it well enough. They sought him at the feast. When we attend upon God in his holy ordinances, we should seek Christ in them, seek him at the gospel feasts. And those who would see Christ at a feast, must seek him there. Or, (2.) Perhaps it was his enemies that were thus waiting an opportunity to seize him, and, if possible, to give an effectual stop to his progress. They said, *Where is he?* *πῶς ἐστὶν ἐκεῖν,* *Where is that fellow?* Thus scornfully and contemptibly do they speak of him. Or it intimates how full their hearts were with thoughts of him, and their town with talk of him, they needed not name him. When they should have welcomed the feast as an opportunity of serving God, they were glad of it as an opportunity of persecuting Christ. Thus Saul hoped to slay David at the new moon, *1 Sam. xx. 27.* Those that seek opportunity to sin in solemn assemblies for religious worship, profane God's ordinances to the last degree, and defy him upon his own ground; it is like striking *within the verge of the court*.

2. The people differed much in their sentiments concerning him, *ver. 12.* There was much murmuring, or muttering rather, among the people concerning him. The enmity of the rulers against Christ, and their enquiries after him, made him to be so much the more talked of, and observed among the people. This ground the gospel of Christ hath got by the opposition made to it, that it has been the more enquired into, and by being every where spoken against, it has come to be every where spoken of, and by that means has been spread the further, and the merits of his cause have been the more searched into. This murmuring was not against Christ, but concerning him; some murmured at the rulers, because they did not countenance and encourage him; others murmured at them, because they did not silence and restrain him. Some murmured that he had so great an interest in Galilee; others, that he had so little interest in Jerusalem. Note, Christ and his religion have been, and will be the subject of much controversy and debate, *Luke xii. 51, 52.* If all would agree to entertain Christ as they ought, there would be perfect peace, but when some receive the light, and others resolve against it, there will be murmuring. The bones in the valley, while they were dead and dry, lay quiet, but when it was said unto them, *live*, there was a noise and a shaking, *Ezek. xxxvii. 7.* But the noise and rencounter of liberty and business, are preferable sure to the silence and agreement of a prison.

Now what were the sentiments of the people concerning him?

1. Some said, *he is a good man.* This was truth, but it was far short of being the *whole truth*. He was not only a good man, but more than a man, he was the *Son of God*. Many that have no ill thoughts of Christ, yet have low thoughts of him; and scarce honour him, even when they speak well of him, because they do not say enough; yet indeed it was his honour, and the reproach of those that persecuted him, that they who would not believe him to be the Messiah, yet could not but own he was a good man.

2. Others said, *nay, but he deceiveth the people*, and if that had been true, he had been a very ill man. The doctrine he preached was sound, and could not be contested; his miracles real, and could not be disproved; his conversation manifestly holy and good, and yet it must be taken for granted, notwithstanding that there is some undiscovered cheat at the bottom, because it is the interest of the chief priests to oppose him, and run him down. Such murmuring as there was among the Jews concerning Christ, there is still among us; the Socinians say, *he is a good man*, and further they say not: The deists will not allow this, but say, *he deceived the people*. Thus some diminish him, others abuse him, but great is the truth.

3. They were frightened by their superiors, from speaking much of him, *ver. 13.* No man spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews. Either, 1. They durst not openly speak well of him. Whilst any one was at liberty to censure and reproach him, none durst vindicate him. Or, 2. They durst not speak at all of him openly. Because nothing could justly be said against him, they would not suffer any thing to be said of him. It was a crime to name him. Thus many have aimed to suppress truth, under colour of silencing disputes about it, and would have all talk of religion hushed, in hopes thereby to bury in oblivion religion it self.

14. ¶ Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. 15. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16. Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self. 18. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. 19. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20. The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21. Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers) and ye on the sabbath-day circumsise a man. 23. If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day? 24. Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. 25. Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? 26. But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him: do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? 27. Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. 28. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of my self, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. 29. But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me. 30. Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. 31. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? 32. ¶ The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him: and the Pharisees, and the chief priests sent officers to take him. 33. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. 34. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. 35. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? 36. What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?

Here is, 1. Christ's publick preaching in the temple, *ver. 14.* He went up into the temple, and taught, according to his custom when he was at Jerusalem. His business was to preach the gospel of the kingdom, and he did it in every place of concourse. His sermon is not recorded, because probably it was to the same purpose with the sermons he had preached in Galilee, which were recorded by the other evangelists. For the gospel is the same to the plain, and to the polite. But that which is observable here is, that it was about the midst of the feast; the fourth or fifth day of the eight. Whether he did not come up to Jerusalem till the middle of the feast, or whether he came up at the beginning, but kept private till now, is not certain. But, Qu. why did he not go to the temple sooner to preach? Ans. 1. Because the people would have more leisure to hear him, and it might be hoped would be better disposed to hear him, when they had spent some days in their booths, as they did at the



the feast of tabernacles. 2. Because he would chuse to appear then, when both his friends and his enemies had done looking for him; and so give a specimen of the method he would observe in his appearances, which is to come at midnight, *Matt. xxv. 6.* But why did he appear thus publicly now? Surely it was to *shame* his persecutors, the chief priests and elders, (1.) By shewing that though they were very bitter against him, yet he did not fear them, nor their power. See *Isa. l. 7, 8.* (2.) By taking their work out of their hands. Their office was to teach the people in the temple, and particularly at the *feast of tabernacles*, *Neh. viii. 17, 18.* But they either did not teach them at all, or taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and therefore he goes up to the temple and teaches the people. When the shepherds of Israel made a prey of the flock, it was time for the chief shepherd to appear, as was promised, *Ezek. xxxiv. 22, 23. Mal. iii. 1.*

2. His discourse with the Jews hereupon; and the conference is reducible to four heads.

First, Concerning *his doctrine*. See here,

1. How the Jews *admired* it, *ver. 15.* They marvelled, saying, *How knows this man letters, having never learned?* Observe here, 1. That our Lord Jesus was not educated in the schools of the prophets, or at the feet of the rabbins; not only did not travel for learning, as the philosophers did, but did not make any use of the schools and academies in his own country. Moses was taught the learning of the Egyptians, but Christ was not taught so much as the learning of the Jews; having received the Spirit *without measure*, he needed not receive any knowledge *from man, or by man*. At the time of Christ's appearing, learning flourished both in the Roman empire, and in the Jewish church, more than in any age before or since, and in such a time of enquiry Christ chose to establish his religion, not in an illiterate age, lest it should look like a design to impose upon the world, yet he himself studied not the learning then in vogue. 2. That Christ *had letters*, though he had never *learned* them; was mighty in the scriptures, though he never had any doctor of the law for his tutor. It is necessary Christ's ministers should have *learning*, as he had, and since they cannot expect to have it as he had it, by inspiration, they must take pains to get it in an ordinary way. 3. That Christ's having learning, though he had not been taught it, made him truly great and wonderful; the Jews speak of it here with wonder. 1. Some it is likely took notice of it to his honour; he that had no human learning, and yet so far excelled all that had, certainly must be endued with a divine knowledge. 2. Others probably mentioned it in diminution and contempt of him; whatever he *seems* to have, he cannot really have any true learning, for he was never at the university, nor took his degree. 3. Some perhaps suggested that he had got his learning by magick arts, or some unlawful means or other; since they know not how he could be a scholar, they will think him a conjurer.

2. What he *asserted* concerning it; three things.

1. That his *doctrine* is *divine*, *ver. 16.* *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* They were offended, because he undertook to *teach*, though he had never learned. In answer to which he tells them, that his doctrine was such as was not to be *learned*, for it was not the product of *human thought*, and natural powers enlarged and elevated by reading and conversation, but it was a *divine revelation*. As God equal with the Father, he might truly have said, *my doctrine is mine, and his that sent me*; but being now in his estate of humiliation, and being as mediator, God's servant, it was more congruous to say, *my doctrine is not mine, not mine only, or mine originally, as man and mediator, but his that sent me*; it doth not centre in my self, or lead ultimately to my self, but to him that sent me; God had promised concerning the great prophet, that he would *put his words into his mouth*, *Deut. xviii. 18.* to which Christ seems here to refer. Note, It is the comfort of those who embrace Christ's doctrine, and the condemnation of those who reject it, that it is a divine doctrine, it is *of God, and not of man*.

2. That the most competent judges of the truth and divine authority of Christ's doctrine, are those that with a sincere and upright heart, desire and endeavour to do the will of God, *ver. 17.* *If any man be willing to do the will of God, hath his will melted into the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or, whether I speak of my self.* Observe here,

(1.) What the question is, concerning the doctrine of Christ, *whether it be of God* or no; whether the gospel be a divine revelation or an imposture. Christ himself was willing to have his doctrine enquired into, whether it were of God or no, much more should his ministers; and we are concerned to examine what grounds we go upon, for if we be deceived, we are miserably deceived.

(2.) Who are likely to succeed in this search; those that *do the will of God*, at least are desirous to do it. Now see, (1.) Who they are that *will do the will of God*; they are such as are *impartial* in their enquiries concerning the will of God, and are not biased by any lust or interest; and such as are resolved by the grace of God, when they find out what the will of God is, to conform to it. They are such as have an honest principle of re-

gard to God, and are truly desirous to glorify and please him. (2.) Whence it is that such a one shall know of the truth of Christ's doctrine. 1. Christ has promised to *give knowledge* to such; he hath said, *he shall know*; and he can give an understanding. Those who improve the light they have, and carefully live up to it, shall be secured by divine grace from destructive mistakes. 2. They are disposed and prepared to *receive* that knowledge. He that is inclined to submit to the rules of the divine law, is disposed to admit the rays of divine light. *To him that has* shall be given; those have the *good understanding*, that *do his commandments*, *Psal. cxl. 10.* Those who *resemble* God; are most likely to *understand* him.

3. That hereby it appeared Christ as a teacher did not speak *of himself*, because he did not seek himself, *ver. 18.*

1. See here the character of a deceiver; he *seeketh his own glory*, which is a sign he *speaks of himself*, as the false christs and false prophets did. Here is the description of the *cheat*, they *speak of themselves*, and have no commission or instructions from God; no warrant but their own will, no inspiration but their own imagination, their own politicks and artifice. Ambassadors *speak not of themselves*; those ministers disclaim that character, who glory in this, that they *speak of themselves*. But see the discovery of the cheat; by this their pretensions are disproved, they consult purely *their own glory*; self-seekers are self-speakers. They who *speak from God*, will speak *for God*, and for his glory; they who aim at their own preferment and interest, make it to appear they had no commission from God.

2. See the contrary character Christ gives of himself and his doctrine. *He that seeketh his glory that sent him*, as I do, makes it to appear that *he is true*. (1.) *He was sent of God*. Those teachers, and those only who were sent of God, are to be received and entertained by us. Those that bring a divine message, must prove a divine mission, either by special-revelation, or regular institution. (2.) *He sought the glory of God*. It was both the tendency of his doctrine, and the tenor of his whole conversation to *glorify God*. (3.) This was a proof that he was *true*, and there was *no unrighteousness in him*. False teachers are most *unrighteous*; they are unjust to God whose name they abuse, and unjust to the souls of men whom they impose upon: There cannot be a greater piece of unrighteousness than this. But Christ made it appear that he was *true*, that he was really what he said he was, that there was *no unrighteousness in him*; no falshood in his doctrine, no fallacy or fraud in his dealings with us.

Secondly, They discourse concerning the crime that was laid to his charge for curing the impotent man, and bidding him carry his bed on the sabbath-day, for which they had formerly prosecuted him, and which was still the pretence of their enmity to him.

1. He argues against them by way of *recrimination*, convicting them of far worse practices, *ver. 19.* How could they for shame censure him for a breach of the law of Moses, when they themselves were such notorious breakers of it? Did not Moses give you the law? And it was their privilege that they had the law; no nation had such a law; but it was their wickedness, that *none of them kept the law*; that they rebelled against it, and lived contrary to it: Many that have the law given them, when they have it do not keep it. Their neglect of the law was universal, *none of you keep it*; neither those of them that were in *posts of honour*, who should have been most *knowing*, nor those that were in *posts of subjection*, that should have been most *obedient*. They boasted of the law, and pretended a zeal for it, and were enraged at Christ for seeming to transgress it, and yet none of them kept it; like those that say they are for the church, and yet never go to church. It was an aggravation of their wickedness in persecuting Christ for breaking the law, that they themselves did not keep it: *None of you keepeth the law*, why then go ye about to kill me for not keeping it? Note, Those are commonly most censorious of others, who are most faulty themselves. Thus hypocrites that are forward to pull a mote out of their brothers eye, are not aware of a beam in their own. *Why go ye about to kill me?* Some make this to be the instance of their not keeping the law; *ye keep not the law*, if ye did, ye would understand your selves better than to go about to kill me for doing a good work. Those that support themselves and their interest by persecution and violence, whatever they pretend, (though they may call themselves *custodes utriusque tabulæ*) are not keepers of the law of God. Chemnitius understands this as a reason why it is time to supersede the law of Moses by the gospel, because the law was found insufficient to *restrain sin*; Moses gave you the law, but you do not keep it, nor are kept by it from the greatest wickedness; there is therefore need of a clearer light, and better law to be brought in, why then do you aim to kill me for introducing it?

Here the *people* rudely interrupted him in his discourse, and contradicted what he said, *ver. 20.* *Thou hast a devil, who goes about to kill thee?* This speaks, 1. The *good opinion* they had of their rulers, who they think would never attempt so ill a thing as to kill him; no, such a veneration they had for their elders



and chief priests, that they would swear for them, they would do no harm to an innocent man. Probably the rulers had their little emissaries among the people who suggested this to them; many deny that wickedness which at the same time they are contriving. 2. The *ill opinion* they had of our Lord Jesus, *thou hast a devil*, thou art possessed with a lying spirit, and art an *ill man* for saying so; so some, or rather, thou art melancholy, and art a *weak man*; thou frightenest thy self with causeless fears, as hypochondriacal people use to do. Not only open phrensies, but silent melancholies were then commonly imputed to the power of Satan: Thou art crazed, hast a disordered brain. Let us not think it strange if the best of men be put under the worst of characters.

To this vile calumny our Saviour returns no direct answer, but seems as if he took no notice of it. Note, Those who would be like Christ must put up affronts, and pass by the indignities and injuries done them; must not regard them, much less resent them, and least of all revenge them: *I as a deaf man heard not*. When Christ was reviled he reviled not again.

2. He argues by way of appeal, and vindication.

1. He appeals to *their own sentiments* of this miracle, ver. 21. *I have done one work and ye all marvel*. Ye cannot chuse but marvel at it as truly great, and altogether supernatural; you must all own it to be marvellous. Or, Though I have done but *one work* that you have any colour to find fault with, yet you marvel, *i. e.* you are offended and displeased as if I had been guilty of some heinous or enormous crime.

2. He appeals to their own practice in other instances. *I have done one work* on the sabbath, and it was done easily, with a word's speaking, and you all marvel, you make a mighty strange thing of it, that a religious man should dare to do such a thing, whereas you yourselves *many a time* do that which is a much more servile work on the sabbath day in the case of circumcision; if it be lawful for you, nay, and your duty to circumcise a child on the sabbath day when it happens to be the eighth day, as no doubt it is, much more was it lawful and good for me to heal a diseased man on that day. Observe,

1. The rise and original of circumcision. *Moses gave you circumcision*, gave you the law concerning it. Here, 1. Circumcision is said to be given you, and, ver. 23. they are said to receive it; it was not imposed upon them as a yoke, but conferred upon them as a favour. Note, The ordinances of God, and particularly those which are seals of the covenant, are *gifts given to men*, and are to be received as such. 2. Moses is said to give it, because it was a part of that law which was given by Moses; yet as Christ said of the manna, *chap. vi. 32*. Moses did not give it them, but God; nay, and it was not of Moses first, but of the fathers, ver. 22. Though it was incorporated into the Mosaic institution, yet it was ordained long before, for it was a seal of the righteousness of faith, and therefore commenced with the promise four hundred and thirty years before, *Gal. iii. 17*. The church-membership of believers and their seed, was not of Moses, or his law, and therefore did not fall with it; but was of the fathers, belonged to the patriarchal church, and was part of that blessing of Abraham which was to come upon the Gentiles, *Gal. iii. 14*.

2. The respect had to the law of circumcision above that of the sabbath, in the constant practice of the Jewish church. The Jewish casuists frequently take notice of it, *Circumcisio & ejus sanatio pellit sabbatum*; so that if a child was born one sabbath day, it was without fail circumcised the next. If then, when the sabbath rest was more strictly insisted on, yet those works were allowed which were *in ordine ad spiritualia*, for the keeping up of religion, much more are they allowed now under the gospel, when the stress is laid more upon the sabbath work.

3. The inference Christ draws from hence in justification of himself, and of what he had done, ver. 23. *A man-child on the sabbath-day receives circumcision, that the law of circumcision might not be broken*; or, as the margin reads it, *without breaking the law*, viz. of the sabbath. Divine commands must be construed so as to agree with each other. Now, if this be allowed by yourselves, how unreasonable are you, who are angry with me because I have made a man every whit whole one the sabbath-day? ἐμὸν ὁλοῶτε; the word is used only here, from ὅλον, *fel*. They were angry at him with the greatest indignation; it was a spiteful anger, anger with gall in it. Note, It is very absurd and unreasonable for us to condemn others for that which we justify ourselves in. Observe the comparison Christ here makes between their *circumcising a child*, and his *healing a man* on the sabbath-day. 1. Circumcision was but a ceremonial institution; it was of the fathers indeed, but not from the beginning; but what Christ did was a good work by the law of nature, a more excellent law than that which made circumcision a good work. 2. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, and made sore; but what Christ did was healing, and made whole. The law works pain, and if that work may be done on the sabbath-day, much more a gospel work, which works peace. 3. Especially, considering that whereas when they had circumcised a child, yet care was only to heal up that part which was circumcised, which might be done, and yet the child remain under other illnesses. Christ had made this man every whit whole, ὅλον ἄνθρωπον ὕγιον, *I have made the whole man healthful and sound*:

The whole body was healed, for the disease affected the whole body; and it was a perfect cure, such as left no relics of the disease behind; nay, Christ not only healed his body, but his soul too, by that admonition, *Go, and sin no more*, and so indeed made the whole man sound, for the soul is the man. Circumcision indeed was intended for the good of the soul, and to make the whole man as it should be, but they had perverted it, and turned it into a meer carnal ordinance; but Christ accompanied his outward cures with inward grace, and so made them sacramental, and healed the whole man.

He concludes this argument with that rule, ver. 24. *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*. This may be applied, either, (1.) In particular to this work which they quarrelled with as a violation of the law. Be not partial in your judgment; judge not, κατ' ὄψιν, with respect of persons; knowing faces, as the Hebrew phrase is, *Deut. i. 17*. It is contrary to the law of justice as well as charity, to censure those who differ in opinion from us as transgressors, in taking that liberty, which yet in those of our own party, and way, and opinion, we allow of; as it is also to commend that in some as necessary strictness and severity, which in others we condemn as imposition and persecution. Or, (2.) In general, To Christ's person and preaching, which they were offended at, and prejudiced against. Those things that are false and designed to impose upon men, commonly appear best, when they are judged of according to the outward appearance, they appear most plausible, *prima facie*. This was it that gained the Pharisees such an interest and reputation, that they appeared right unto men, *Mat. xxiii. 27, 28*. and men judged of them by that appearance, and so were sadly mistaken in them. But, faith Christ, be not too confident that all are real saints, who are seeming ones. And with reference to himself, his outward appearance was far short of his real dignity and excellency, for he took upon him the form of a servant, *Phil. ii. 7*. in the likeness of sinful flesh, *Rom. viii. 3*. had no form or comeliness, *Isa. liii. 2*. So that they who undertook to judge whether he were the Son of God or no, by his outward appearance, were not likely to judge righteous judgment. The Jews expected the outward appearance of the Messiah to be pompous and magnificent, and attended with all the ceremonies of secular grandeur, and judging of Christ by that rule, their judgment was from first to last, a continual mistake, for the kingdom of Christ was not to be of this world, nor to come with observation. If a divine power accompanied him, and God bare him witness, and the scriptures were fulfilled in him, tho' his appearance was never so mean, they ought to receive him, and to judge by faith, and not by the sight of the eye. See *Isa. xi. 3*. and *1 Sam. xvi. 7*. Christ and his doctrine, and doings, desire nothing but righteous judgment; if truth and justice may but pass the sentence, Christ and his cause will carry the day. We must not judge concerning any by their outward appearance, not by their titles, the figure they make in the world, and their fluttering shew, but by their intrinsic worth, and the gifts and graces of God's Spirit in them.

Thirdly, Christ discoursed with them here concerning himself, whence he came, and whither he was going, ver. 25—36.

1. Whence he came, ver. 25—31. In the account of this, observe,

1. The objection concerning this, started by some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who seem to have been of all other most prejudiced against him, ver. 25. One would think that they who lived at the fountain head of knowledge and religion, should have been most ready to receive the Messiah, but it proved quite contrary; those that have plenty of the means of knowledge and grace, if they are not made better by them, are commonly made worse; and our Lord Jesus has oft met with the least welcome from that one would expect the best from. But it was not without some just cause, that it came into a proverb, *The nearer the church, the farther from God*.

These people of Jerusalem shewed their ill will to Christ. (1.) By their reflecting on the rulers, because they let him alone. Is not this he whom they seek to kill? the multitude of the people that came up out of the country to the feast, did not suspect there was any design on foot against him, and therefore they said, *Who goes about to kill thee?* ver. 20. But they of Jerusalem knew the plot, and irritated their rulers to put it in execution. Is not this he whom they seek to kill? Why do they not do it then? who hinders them? They say they have a mind to get him out of the way, and yet lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing to him; do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? ver. 26. Here they sily and maliciously insinuate two things to exasperate the rulers against Christ, when indeed they needed no spur. 1. That by conniving at his preaching, they brought their authority into contempt. Must a man that is condemned by the Sanhedrin as a deceiver, be permitted to speak boldly, without any check or contradiction? This makes their sentence to be but *brutum fulmen*; if our rulers will suffer themselves to be thus trampled upon, they may thank themselves if none stand in awe of them and their laws. Note, The worst of persecutions have oft been carried on under colour of the necessary support of authority and government. 2. That hereby they brought their judgment into suspicion; Do they know that this is the Christ? It is spoken ironically, How came they to change their



their mind? What new discovery have they light on? They give people occasion to think that they believe him to be the Christ, and are concerned to act vigorously against him to clear themselves from the suspicion. Thus the rulers, who had made the people enemies to Christ, made them *seven times more the children of hell than themselves*, Matt. xxiii. 15. When religion and the profession of Christ's name are *out of fashion*, and consequently *out of repute*, many are strongly tempted to persecute and oppose them, only that they may not be thought to favour them, and incline to them. And for this reason apostates, and the degenerate offspring of good parents, have been sometimes worse than others, as it were to wipe off the stain of their profession. It was strange the rulers thus *irritated* did not seize Christ; but his hour was not yet come; and God can tie mens hands to admiration, though he do not turn their hearts.

(2.) By their exception against his being the Christ; in which appeared more malice than matter, *ver. 27*. If the rulers think him to be the Christ, we neither can, nor will believe him to be so, for we have this argument against it, that *we know this man, whence he is, but when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is*. Here is a fallacy in the argument, for the propositions are not both *ad idem*. (1.) If they speak of his *divine nature*, it is true, that when Christ comes, *no man knows whence he is*, for he is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, who was *without descent*, and *his goings forth have been of old from everlasting*, Mic. v. 2. But then it was not true, that as for this man, they knew whence he was, for they knew not his divine nature, nor how *the word was made flesh*. (2.) If they speak of his *human nature*, it was true that they knew whence he was, who was his mother, and where he was bred up; but then it was false, that ever it was said of the Messiah, that none should know whence he was, for it was known before *where he should be born*, Matt. ii. 4, 5. Observe, 1. How they *despised him*, because they knew *whence he was*. Familiarity breeds contempt, and we are apt to disdain the use of those whom we know the *rise of*; Christ's own received him not, because he was *their own*, for which very reason they should the rather have loved him; and been thankful that their nation, and their age was honoured with his appearance. 2. How they endeavoured unjustly to fasten the ground of their prejudice upon the scriptures, as if they countenanced them, when there was no such thing. Therefore people err concerning Christ, because they *know not the scriptures*.

2. Christ's answer to this objection, *ver. 28, 29*. He spoke freely and boldly, he *cried in the temple, as he taught*, he spoke this louder than the rest of his discourse, 1. To express his earnestness, being *grieved for the hardness of their hearts*; there may be a vehemency in contending for the truth, where yet there is no intemperate heat or passion. We may instruct gainsayers with warmth, and yet with *meekness*. 2. The priests, and those that were prejudiced against him, did not come near enough to hear his preaching, and therefore he must speak louder than ordinary, what he will have them to hear. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear this.

Now Christ's answer to their cavil is,

1. By way of concession, granting that they did, or might, know his original as to the flesh, *ye both know me, and ye know whence I am*. You know I am of your own nation, and one of your selves. It is no disparagement to the doctrine of Christ, that there is that in it, which is level to the capacities of the meanest; plain truths discovered even by nature's light, of which we may say we know whence they are; *ye know me*, i. e. ye think ye know me; but ye are mistaken; ye take me to be the carpenter's son, and born at Nazareth, but it is not so.

2. By way of negation, denying that that which they did see in him, and know of him, was all that was to be known, and therefore if they looked no further than that they judged by the outward appearance only. They knew whence he came perhaps, and where he had his birth, but he will tell them what they knew not, *from whom he came*. 1. That he did not *come of himself*; that he did not run without sending, nor come as a private person, but with a publick character. 2. That he was sent of his Father; this is twice mentioned, *He hath sent me*. And again, *He hath sent me*, to say what I say, and do what I do. This he was himself well assured of, and therefore knew that his Father would bear him out; and it is well for us, that we are assured of it too, that we may with holy confidence go to God by him. 3. That he was *from his Father*, *was autē ἐκ πατρὸς*, not only sent from him as a servant, from his master, but from him by eternal generation, as a son from his father, by essential emanation, as the beams from the sun. 4. That the Father who sent him is true; he had promised to give the Messiah, and though the Jews had forfeited the promise, yet he that made the promise is true, and has performed it; he had promised that the Messiah should see his seed, and be successful in his undertaking; and though the generality of the Jews reject him and his gospel, yet *he is true*, and will fulfil the promise in the calling of the Gentiles. 5. That these unbelieving Jews did not know the Father. *He that sent me, whom ye know not*. There is much ignorance of God, even with many that have a *form of knowledge*; and the true reason why people reject Christ, is because they do not know God; for there is such a harmony of the divine attributes in the work of redemption, and such an admirable agreement between natural and revealed religion, that the right knowledge of the former would not only admit, but introduce the latter. 6. Our

Lord Jesus was intimately acquainted with the Father that *sent him; but I know him*. He knew him so well, that he was not at all *in doubt*, concerning his mission from him, but perfectly *assured* of that, nor at all *in the dark* concerning the work he had to do, but perfectly *apprized* of that, Matt. xi. 27.

3. The provocation which this gave to his enemies, who therefore hated him because he *told them the truth*, *ver. 30*. They sought therefore to take him, to lay violent hands on him, not only to do him a mischief, but some way or other to be the death of him; but by the restraint of an invisible power it was prevented, no body touched him, *because his hour was not yet come*, that was not their reason why they did it not, but God's reason why he hindered them from doing it. Note, (1.) The faithful preachers of the truths of God, though they behave themselves with never so much prudence and meekness, yet must expect to be hated and persecuted by those, who think themselves tormented by their testimony, Rev. xi. 10. (2.) God has wicked men in a chain, and whatever mischief they *would do*, yet they *can do* no more than God will suffer them to do. The malice of persecutors is *impotent*, even then when it is most *impetuous*, and when Satan *fills their hearts*, yet God *ties their hands*. (3.) God's servants are sometimes wonderfully protected by undiscernable, unaccountable means: Their enemies do not do the mischief they designed, and yet neither they themselves, nor any one else can tell why they do not. (4.) Christ had *his hour* set, which was to put a period to his day and work on earth, and so have all his people and all his ministers; and till that hour comes, the attempts of their enemies against them are ineffectual, and their day shall be lengthened as long as their Master has any work for them to do; nor can all the powers of hell and earth prevail against them, until they have *finished their testimony*.

4. The good effect which Christ's discourse had notwithstanding this upon some of his hearers, *ver. 31*. Many of the people believed on him. As he was set for the fall of some, so for the rising again of others: Even there, where the gospel meets with opposition, yet there may be a great deal of good done, 1 Thess. ii. 2. Observe here,

1. Who they were that believed; not a few, but many, more than one would have expected, when the stream run so strong the other way. But these, *many were of the people*, ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου, of the multitude, the crowd, the inferior sort, the mob, the rabble, some would have called them. We must not measure the prosperity of the gospel, by its success among the great ones, nor must ministers say they labour in vain, though none but the poor, and those of no figure receive the gospel, 1 Cor. i. 26.

2. What induced them to believe; the miracles which he did. Which were not only the accomplishment of the Old Testament prophecies, Isa. xxxv. 5, 6. but an argument of a divine power. He that had an ability to do that which none but God can do, control and over-rule the powers of nature, no doubt had authority to enact that which none but God can enact, a law that shall bind conscience, and a covenant that shall give life.

3. How weak their faith was; they do not positively assert as the Samaritans did, *This is indeed the Christ*, but they only argue, *When Christ comes, will he do more miracles than these?* They take it for granted that Christ will come, and when he comes will do many miracles; and is not this he then? In him we see, though not all that worldly pomp we have fancied, yet all that divine power we have believed the Messiah should appear in, and therefore why may not this be he? They believe it, but have not courage to own it. Note, Even weak faith may be true faith, and so accounted, so accepted by the Lord Jesus, who despises not the day of small things.

2. Whither he was going, *ver. 32—36*. Where observe,

1. The design of the Pharisees and chief priests against him, *ver. 32*.

1. The provocation given them was, they had information brought them by their spies, who insinuated themselves into the conversation of the people, and gathered stories to carry to their jealous masters, that the people murmured such things concerning him; that there were many who had a respect and value for him, notwithstanding all they had done to make him odious. Though the people did but whisper these things, and had not courage to speak out, yet the Pharisees were enraged at it. The equity of that government is justly suspected by others, which is so suspicious of it self, as to take notice of or be influenced by the secret various and uncertain mutterings of the common people. The Pharisees valued themselves very much upon the respects of the people, and were sensible that if Christ did thus increase, they must decrease.

2. The project they laid hereupon was to seize Jesus, and take him into custody. They sent officers to take him, not to take up those who murmured concerning him, and frighten them, no, the most effectual way to disperse the flock, is to smite the shepherd. The Pharisees seem to be the ring-leaders in this prosecution, but they as such had no power, and therefore they got the chief priests, the judges of the ecclesiastical court, to join with them, who were ready enough to do so. The Pharisees were the great pretenders to learning, and the chief priests to sanctity. As the world by wisdom knew not God, but the greatest philosophers were guilty of the greatest blunders in natural religion; so the Jewish church by their wisdom knew not Christ, but their greatest rabbins were the greatest



greatest fools concerning him, nay, they were the most inveterate enemies to him. Those wicked rulers had their officers, officers of their court, church-officers, whom they employed to take Christ, and who were ready to go on their errand, though it was an ill errand. If Saul's footmen will not, he has a herdsman that will turn and fall upon the priests of the Lord, 1 Sam. xxii. 18.

2. The discourse of our Lord Jesus hereupon, ver. 33, 34. *Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to him that sent me, ye shall seek me, and shall not find me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come.* These words, like the pillar of cloud and fire have a bright side, and a dark side.

1. They have a *bright side* towards our Lord Jesus himself, and speak abundance of comfort to him, and all his faithful followers, that are exposed to difficulties and dangers for his sake. Three things Christ here comforted himself with.

(1.) That he had but *a little time* to continue here in this troublesome world. He sees he is never likely to have a quiet day among them, but the best of it is, his warfare will shortly be accomplished, and then he shall be *no more in this world*, John xvii. 11. who ever we are *with* in this world, friends or foes, it is but a *little while* we shall be with them. And it is matter of comfort to those who are *in* the world, but not *of* it, and therefore are hated by it, and sick of it, that they shall not be *in it always*, they shall not be *in it long*. We must be *a while* with those that are pricking briars, and grieving thorns, but thanks be to God, it is but a little while, and we shall be out of their reach. Our days being *evil*, it is well they are *few*.

(2.) That when he should quit this troublesome world, he should *go to him that sent him*. *I go*. Not I am driven away by force, but I voluntarily *go*, having finished my embassy, I return to him on whose errand I came. *Then*, when I have done my work with you, then, and not till then, I go to him *that sent me*, and will *receive me*, will *prefer me*, as ambassadors are when they return. Their rage against him would not only not hinder him from, but hasten him to the glory and joy that was set before him. Let those who suffer for Christ, comfort themselves with this, that they have a God to go to, and are going to him, going apace, to be for ever with him.

(3.) That though they persecuted him here, wherever he went, yet that none of their persecutions could follow him to heaven. *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me*. It appears by their enmity to his followers when he was gone, that if they could have reached him, they would have persecuted him, but ye cannot come into that temple as ye do into this. *Where I am*, i. e. where I then *shall be*; but he expresseth it thus, because even when he was on earth by his divine nature, and divine affections, he was in heaven, John iii. 13. Or it notes, that he should be *so soon* there, that he was as good as there already. Note, It adds to the happiness of glorified saints, that they are out of the reach of the devil, and all his wicked instruments.

2. These words have a *black and dark side* towards these wicked Jews that hated and persecuted Christ. They now longed to be rid of him, Away with him from the earth; but let them know,

(1.) That according to their choice, so should their doom be. They were industrious to *drive him* from them, and their sin shall be their punishment, he will not trouble them long, yet a little while and he will *depart* from them. It is just with God to forsake those that think his presence a burthen. They that are weary of Christ, need no more to make them miserable than to have *their wish*.

(2.) That they would certainly repent their choice when it was too late. 1. They should in vain seek the presence of the Messiah. *Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me*. Ye shall expect the *Christ to come*, but your eyes shall fail with looking for him, and ye shall never find him. They who rejected the true Messiah when he did come, were justly abandoned to a miserable and endless expectation of one that should never come. Or, it may refer to the final rejection of sinners, from the favour and grace of Christ at the great day; those who now seek Christ shall find him, but the day is coming, when those who now refuse him, *shall seek him, and shall not find him*. See Prov. i. 28. they will in vain cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us*. Or, perhaps these words might be fulfilled in the despair of some of those Jews, who possibly might be convinced, and not converted, who would wish in vain to see Christ, and to hear him preach again; but the day of grace is over, Luke xvii. 22. yet that is not all. 2. They should in vain expect a place in heaven. *Where I am*, and where all believers shall be with me, *thither ye cannot come*; not only because they are *excluded* by the just and irreversible sentence of the judge, and the sword of the angel at every gate of the new Jerusalem, to keep *the way of the tree of life* against those who have *no right to enter*, but because they are *disabled* by their own iniquity, and infidelity; ye *cannot come*, because *ye will not*. Those that hate to be where Christ is, in his word and ordinances on earth, are very unfit to be where he is in his glory in heaven; for indeed heaven would be no heaven to them, such are the antipathies of an unsanctified soul to the felicities of that state.

3. Their descant upon this discourse, ver. 35, 36. *They said among themselves, whither will he go?* See here,

(1.) Their wilful ignorance and blindness. He had expressly said whether he would go, to him that sent him, to his Father in

heaven, and yet they ask, *Whither will he go?* and *what manner of saying is this?* None so blind as those that will not see, that will not heed. Christ's sayings are *plain to him that understandeth*, and difficult only to those that are minded to quarrel.

(2.) Their daring contempt of Christ's threatnings. Instead of trembling at that terrible word, *ye shall seek me, and not find me*, which speaks the utmost degree of misery, they banter it, and make a jest of it, as those sinners that *mock at fear, and are not affrighted*, Isa. v. 19. Amos v. 18. *Let him make speed. But be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.*

(3.) Their inveterate malice and rage against Christ. All they dreaded in his *departure* was, that he would be out of the reach of their power, *Whither will he go, that we shall not find him?* If he be above ground we will have him; we will leave no place unsearched, as Ahab in quest of Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 10.

(4.) Their proud disdain of the Gentiles, whom they here call the *dispersed of the Gentiles*; meaning either the Jews that were *scattered* abroad among the Greeks, Jam. i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 1. will he go and make an interest among those silly people? Or, the Gentiles *dispersed* over the world, in distinction from the Jews, who were *incorporated* into one church and nation, will he make his court to them?

(5.) Their jealousy of the least intimation of favour to the Gentiles; will he go and *teach the Gentiles*? Will he carry his doctrine to them? Perhaps they had heard of some items of respect shewed by him to the Gentiles, as in his sermon at Nazareth, and in the case of the centurion, and the woman of Canaan, and there was nothing they dreaded more than the *comprehension* of the Gentiles. So common is it for those who have lost the power of religion to be very jealous for the monopoly of the name. They now made a *jest* of his going to *teach the Gentiles*, but not long after he did it *in good earnest* by his apostles and ministers, and gathered those *dispersed* people, solely to the grief of the Jews, Rom. x. 19. So true is that of Solomon, *The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him*.

37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) 40. ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet. 41. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? 42. Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43. So there was a division among the people because of him. 44. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

In these verses we have,

First, Christ's discourse with the explication of it, ver. 37, 38, 39. It is likely these are only short hints of what he enlarged upon, but they have in them the substance of the whole gospel; here is a *gospel invitation to come to Christ*, and a *gospel promise of comfort and happiness in him*. Now observe,

1. When he made this invitation. *On the last day* of the feast of tabernacles, *that great day*. The *eighth day*, which concluded that solemnity was to be a *holy convocation*, Lev. xxiii. 36. Now on this day Christ published this gospel call. Because, 1. Much people were gathered together, and if the invitation was given to *many*, it might be hoped *some* would accept of it, Prov. i. 7. Numerous assemblies give opportunity of doing the more good. 2. The people were now returning to their homes, and he would give them this to carry away with them as his parting word. When a great congregation is to be dismissed, and is about to scatter, as here, it is affecting to think, that in all probability they will never come all together again in this world, and therefore if we can say or do any thing to help them to heaven, that must be the time. It is good to be lively at the close of an ordinance. Christ made this offer *on the last day of the feast*. (1.) To those who had turned a deaf ear to his preaching on the foregoing days of this sacred week; he will try them once more, and if they will yet hear his voice, they shall live. (2.) To those who perhaps might never have such another offer made them, and therefore were concerned to accept of this; it would be half a year before there would be another feast, and in that time they would many of them be in their graves. *Behold now is the accepted time*.

2. How he made this invitation: *Jesus stood and cried*. Which notes, 1. His great earnestness and importunity. His heart was upon it, to bring poor souls in to himself. The erection of his body, and the elevation of his voice, were indications of the intenseness



intenseness of his mind. Love to souls will make preachers lively. 2. His desire that all might take notice, and take hold of this invitation. He *stood and cried*, that he might the better be heard, for this is what every one that hath ears is concerned to hear. Gospel truth seeks no corners, because it fears no trials. The heathen oracles were delivered clandestinely by them that *peeped and muttered*; but the oracles of the gospel were proclaimed by one that *stood and cried*. How sad is the case of man, that he must be *importuned* to be happy, and how wonderful the grace of Christ, that he will *importune* him! *Ho every one*, Isa. lv. 1.

3. The invitation it self, which is, (1.) Very general; if *any man thirst*, whoever he be, he is invited to Christ. Be he high or low, rich or poor, young or old, bond or free, Jew or Gentile. (2.) Very gracious; *if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink*. If any man desires to be truly and eternally happy, let him apply himself to me, and be ruled by me, and I will undertake to make him so.

(1.) The persons invited are such as *thirst*, which may be understood, either, 1. Of the *indigence* of their cases; either as to their *outward* condition; if any man be destitute of the comforts of this life, or fatigued with the crosses of it, let his poverty and affliction, draw him to Christ, for that peace which the world can neither give nor take away: Or, as to their *inward* state, if any man want spiritual blessings, he may be supplied with me. Or, 2. Of the *inclination* of their souls, and their desires towards a spiritual happiness. If any man hunger and thirst after righteousness, that is, truly desire the good will of God towards him, and the good work of God in him.

(2.) The invitation it self, *let him come to me*. Let him not go to the ceremonial law, which would neither *pacify* the conscience, nor *purify* it, and therefore could not make the *comers thereunto perfect*, Heb. x. 1. Nor let him go to the heathen philosophy, that doth but beguile men, lead them into a wood, and leave them there; but let him *go to Christ*, admit his doctrine, submit to his discipline, believe in him; come to him as the fountain of living waters, the giver of all comfort.

(3.) The satisfaction promised; let him come *and drink*, he shall have what he comes for, and abundantly more; shall have that which will not only *refresh*, but *replenish* a soul that desires to be happy.

4. A gracious promise annexed to this gracious call, ver. 38. *He that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow—*

1. See here what it is to come to Christ. It is to *believe on him, as the scripture hath said*; it is to receive and entertain him as he is offered to us in the gospel. We must not frame a Christ according to our fancy, but believe in a Christ according to the scripture.

2. See how thirsty souls that come to Christ shall be made to drink; Israel that believed Moses drank of the *rock that followed them*, the streams followed; but believers drink of a rock in them, *Christ in them*; he is in them a *well of living water*, John iv. 14. Provision is made not only for their *present* satisfaction, but for their *continual, perpetual* comfort. Here is, (1.) *Living water*, running water, which the Hebrew language calls *living*, because still in motion. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to *living*, meaning running water, because they are the active, quickening principles of spiritual life, and the earnest and beginnings of eternal life. See Jer. ii. 13. (2.) *Rivers* of living water, which notes both plenty and constancy. The comfort flows in both *plentifully* and *constantly* as a river; strong as a stream to bear down the oppositions of doubts and fears. There is a fulness in Christ of grace for grace. (3.) These flow *out of his belly*, i. e. out of his heart and soul. That is the subject of the Spirit's working, and the seat of his government. There *gracious principles* are planted, and out of the heart, in which the Spirit dwells, flow the *issues of life*, Prov. iv. 23. There divine comforts are lodged, and the joy that a *stranger doth not intermeddle with*. *He that believes, has the witness in himself*, 1 John v. 10. *Sat lucis intus*.

Observe further, where there are *springs* of grace and comfort in the soul, they will *send forth streams*. *Out of his belly shall flow rivers*. (1.) That grace and comfort will *evidence itself*. Good affections will produce good actions, and a holy heart will be seen in a holy life; the tree is known by its fruits, and the fountain by its streams. (2.) It will *communicate itself* for the benefit of others; a good man is a common good. His *mouth is a well of life*, Prov. x. 11. It is not enough that we *drink waters out of our own cistern*, that we our selves take the comfort of the grace given us, but we must let our *fountains be dispersed abroad*, Prov. v. 15, 16.

Those words, *as the scripture hath said*, seem to refer to some promise in the Old Testament to this purpose, and there are many; as that God would *pour out* his Spirit, which is a Metaphor borrowed from waters, Prov. i. 23. Joel ii. 28. Isa. xlv. 3. Zech. xii. 10. that the *dry land should become springs of water*, Isa. xli. 18. that there should be *rivers in the desert*, Isa. xliii. 19. that gracious souls should be like a *spring of water*, Isa. lviii. 11. and the church a *well of living water*, Cant. iv. 15. And here may be an allusion to the waters issuing out of Ezekiel's temple, Ezek. xlvi. 1. compare Rev. xxii. 1. and see Zech. xiv. 8.

Dr. Lightfoot and others tell us, it was a custom of the Jews, which they received by tradition, on the *last day of the feast of tabernacles*, to have a solemnity, which they called *Libatio aquæ*, the pouring out of water. They fetched a golden vessel of water from the pool of Siloam, brought it into the temple with sound of trumpet and other ceremonies, and upon the ascent to the altar, poured it out before the Lord with all possible expressions of joy. Some of their writers make the water to signify *the law*, and refer to Isa. xii. 3.—lv. 1. Others, *the holy Spirit*. And it is thought our Saviour might here allude to this custom. Believers shall have the comfort, not of a vessel of water fetched from a pool, but of a river flowing from themselves. The joy of the law, and the pouring out of the water, which signified that, is not to be compared with the joy of the gospel in the wells of salvation.

5. Here is the evangelist's exposition of this promise, ver. 39. *This spake he of the Spirit*; not of any outward advantages accruing to believers, as perhaps some misunderstood him, but of the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Spirit: See how scripture is the best interpreter of scripture.

Observe, 1. It is promised to *all that believe on Christ*, that they shall *receive the Holy Ghost*. Some received his miraculous gifts, Mark xvi. 17, 18. all receive his sanctifying graces. The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of the great blessings promised in the new covenant, Acts ii. 39. and if *promised*, no doubt *performed* to all that have an interest in that covenant.

2. The Spirit dwelling and working in believers, is as a *fountain of living*, running water, out of which plentiful streams flow, cooling and cleansing as water, mollifying and moistening as water, making them fruitful, and others joyful; see John iii. 5. When the apostles spoke so *fluently* of the things of God as the Spirit gave them utterance, Acts ii. 4. and afterwards preached and wrote the gospel of Christ with such a *flood* of divine eloquence, then this was fulfilled, *out of his belly shall flow rivers*.

3. This plentiful effusion of the Spirit was yet the matter of a promise; for *the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*. See here,

1. That *Jesus was not yet glorified*. It was certain he should be glorified, and he was ever worthy of all honour, but he was as yet in a state of humiliation and contempt. He had never forfeited the glory he had before all worlds, nay, he had *merited* a further glory, and besides his *hereditary* honours, might claim the *achievement* of a *mediatorial* crown, and yet all this is in reversion. Jesus is now *upheld*, Isa. xlii. 1. is now *satisfied*, Isa. liii. 11. is now *justified*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. but he is *not yet glorified*. And if Christ must wait for his glory, let not us think much to wait for ours.

2. That *the Holy Ghost was not yet given*: *ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἦν πνεῦμα ἅγιον*, for the Holy Ghost was not yet. The Spirit of God was from eternity, for in the beginning he *moved upon the face of the waters*. He was in the Old Testament prophets and saints, and Zachary and Elizabeth were both *filled with the Holy Ghost*. This therefore must be understood of that eminent, plentiful, and general effusion of the Spirit which was promised, Joel ii. 28. and accomplished, Acts ii. 1. *The Holy Ghost was not yet given* in that visible manner that was intended. If we compare the clear knowledge, and strong grace of the disciples of Christ themselves after that day of Pentecost, with their darkness and weakness before, we shall understand in what sense *the Holy Ghost was not yet given*; the earnest and first-fruits of the Spirit were given, but the full harvest was not yet come: That which is most properly called the *dispensation of the Spirit* did not yet commence. *The Holy Ghost was not yet given* in such rivers of living water as should issue forth to water the whole earth, even the Gentile world; not in the *gifts of tongues*, to which perhaps this promise principally refers.

3. That the reason why *the Holy Ghost was not yet given*, was because *Jesus was not yet glorified*. (1.) The death of Christ is sometimes called his glorification, Joh. xiii. 31. for in his cross he conquered and triumphed. Now the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased by the blood of Christ, that was the *valuable consideration* upon which the *grant* was grounded, and therefore till that *price was paid* (though many other gifts were bestowed upon its being *secured* to be paid) the Holy Ghost was not given. (2.) There was not so much need of the Spirit, while Christ was himself here upon earth, as there was when he was gone, to supply the want of him. (3.) The giving of the Holy Ghost was to be both an *answer* to Christ's *intercession*, Joh. xiv. 16. and an *act* of his *dominion*, and therefore till he is glorified, and enters upon both these, the Holy Ghost is not given. (4.) The conversion of the Gentiles was the glorifying of Jesus. When certain Greeks began to enquire after Christ, he said, *now is the Son of man glorified*, John xii. 23. Now the time for that was not yet come, when the gospel should be propagated in the nations, and therefore there was as yet no occasion for the *gift of tongues*, that *river of living water*. But observe, though the Holy Ghost was not yet given, yet he was *promised*; it was now the great *promise of the Father*, Acts i. 4. Though the gifts of Christ's grace are *long deferred*, yet they are *well secured*; and while we



are waiting for the good promised, we have the promise to live upon, which *shall speak and shall not lye*.

Secondly, The consequents of this discourse; what entertainment it met with; in general, it occasioned differences, *ver. 43. There was a division among the people because of him.* There was a *schism*, so the word is; there were diversities of opinions, and those managed with heat and contention: Various sentiments, and those such as set them at *variance*. Think we that Christ came to send peace, that all would unanimously embrace his gospel; no, but the effect of the preaching of his gospel would be *division*, for while some are gathered to it, others will be gathered against it; and this will put things into a *ferment*, as here; but this is no more the fault of the gospel, than it is the fault of a wholesome medicine, that it stirs up the *peccant* humours in the body, in order to the discharge of them. Observe what the debate was:

1. Some were taken with him, and well affected to him. *Many of the people, when they heard this saying*, heard him with such compassion and kindness invite poor sinners to him, and with such authority engage to make them happy, they could not but think highly of him. (1.) Some of them said, *of a truth this is the prophet*, that prophet which Moses spake of to the fathers who should be like unto him; or, this is *the prophet*, who according to the received notions of the Jewish church, is to be the harbinger and forerunner of the Messiah; or, *this is truly a prophet*, one divinely inspired, and sent of God. (2.) Others went further, and said, *this is the Christ*, *ver. 41. not the prophet of the Messiah, but the Messiah himself.* The Jews had at this time a more than ordinary expectation of the Messiah, which made them ready to say upon every occasion, *lo here is Christ*, or *lo he is there*; and this seems to be only the effect of some such confused and floating notions, which caught at the first appearance, for we do not find that these people became his disciples and followers; a good opinion of Christ is far short of a lively faith in Christ; many give Christ a good word, that give him no more. These here said, *this is the prophet*, and *this is the Christ*, but could not persuade themselves to leave all and follow him; and so this their testimony to Christ was but a testimony against themselves.

2. Others were prejudiced against him. No sooner was this great truth started, that *Jesus is the Christ*, but immediately it was contradicted, and argued against; and this one thing, that his rise and original was (as they took it for granted) out of Galilee, was thought enough to answer all the arguments for his being the Christ. For, *shall Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the scripture said, that Christ comes of the seed of David?*

See here, (1.) A laudable knowledge of the scripture. They were so far in the right, that the Messiah was to be a *rod out of the stem of Jesse*, *Isa. xi. 1.* That out of Bethlehem should arise the *governour*, *Mic. v. 2.* This even the common people knew by the traditional expositions which their scribes gave them. Perhaps these people who had these scriptures so ready to object against Christ, were not alike knowing in other parts of holy writ, but had had these put into their mouths by their leaders, to fortify their prejudices against Christ. Many that espouse some corrupt notions, and spend their zeal in defence of them, seem to be very ready in the scriptures, when indeed they know little more than those scriptures which they have been taught to *pervert*.

(2.) A culpable ignorance of our Lord Jesus. They speak of it as certain, and past dispute, that *Jesus was of Galilee*, whereas by enquiring of himself, or his mother, or his disciples, or by consulting the genealogies of the family of David, or the register at Bethlehem, they might have known, that he was the son of David, and a native of Bethlehem, but *this they willingly are ignorant of*. Thus gross falsehoods in matters of fact concerning persons and things, are often taken up by prejudiced and partial men, and great resolves founded upon them, even in the same place, and the same age, wherein the persons live, and the things are done, while the truth might easily be found out.

3. Others were enraged against him, and they would have taken him, *ver. 44.* Though what he said was most sweet and gracious, yet they were exasperated against him for it: Thus did our Master suffer ill, for saying and doing well. *They would have taken him*; they hoped somebody or other would seize him, and if they had thought no one else would, they would have done it themselves: *They would have taken him*, but no man laid hands on him, being restrained by an invisible power, because his hour was not come. As the malice of Christ's enemies is always *unreasonable*, so sometimes the suspension of it is *unaccountable*.

45. ¶ Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46. The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. 47. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? 48. Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? 49. But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. 50. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by

night, being one of them) 51. Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth? 52. They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. 53. And every man went unto his own house.

The chief priests and Pharisees are here in a close cabal, contriving how to suppress Christ; though this was the *great day of the feast*, they attended not the religious services of the day, but left that to the vulgar, to whom it was common for those great ecclesiasticks to consign and turn over the business of devotion, while they thought themselves better employed in the affairs of church policy. They sat in the council-chamber, expecting Christ to be brought a prisoner to them, they having issued out warrants for the apprehending of him, *ver. 32.* Now here we are told,

First, What passed between them and their own officers, who returned without him, *re infecta*. Observe,

1. The reproof they gave the officers for not executing the warrant they gave them; *why have ye not brought him?* He appeared publicly, the people were many of them disgusted, and would have assisted them in taking him; this was *the last day of the feast*, and they would not have such another opportunity; why then did you neglect your duty? It vexed them that those who were their own creatures, who depended on them, and on whom they depended, into whose minds they had instilled prejudices against Christ, should thus disappoint them. Note, Mischievous men fret that they cannot do the mischief they would, *Psal. cxii. 10. Neh. vi. 16.*

2. The reason which the officers gave for the non-execution of their warrant, *ver. 46. Never man spake like this man.* Now, 1. This was a very great truth, that *never any man spake with that wisdom, and power, and grace, that convincing clearness, and that charming sweetness wherewith Christ spoke*; none of the prophets, no, not Moses himself. 2. The very officers that were sent to take him, were taken with him, and acknowledged this. Though it is likely they were men that had no quick sense of reason or eloquence, and it is certain had no inclination to think well of Jesus, yet so much *self-evidence* was there in what Christ said, that they could not but prefer him before all those that sat in Moses's seat. Thus Christ was preserved by the power God has upon the consciences, even of bad men. 3. They said this to their lords and masters, who could not endure to hear any thing that tended to the honour of Christ, and yet could not avoid hearing this; providence ordered it so, that this should be said to them, that it might be a vexation in their sin, and an aggravation of their sin: Their own officers are witnesses against them, who could not be suspected to be biased in favour of Christ. This testimony of theirs should have made them reflect upon themselves with this thought, Do we know what we are doing, when we are hating and persecuting one that speaks so admirably well?

3. The Pharisees endeavour to secure their officers to their interest, and to beget in them prejudices against Christ, whom they saw them begin to be well affected to; to prevent which, they suggest two things:

1. That if they embrace the gospel of Christ they will *deceive themselves*, *ver. 47. Are ye also deceived?* Christianity has, from its first rise, been represented to the world as a great cheat upon it, and they that embraced it as men *deceived*, then when they began to be *undeceived*. They that looked for a Messiah in external pomp, thought them deceived who believed in a Messiah that appeared in poverty and disgrace; but the event declares, that none were ever more shamefully deceived, nor put a greater cheat upon themselves, than those who promised themselves worldly wealth, and secular dominion with the Messiah. Observe what a *compliment* the Pharisees put upon these officers, *Are ye also deceived?* What! men of your sense, and thought, and figure; men that know better things than to be imposed upon by every pretender, and upstart teacher: They endeavour to prejudice them against Christ, by persuading them to think well of themselves.

2. That they will *disparage themselves*. Most men, even in their religion, are willing to be governed by the example of those of the *first rank*; these officers therefore, whose preferments, such as they were, gave them a *sense of honour*, are desired to consider,

1. That if they become disciples of Christ, they go contrary to those who were persons of quality and reputation; *Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him?* You know they have not, and you ought to be bound up by their judgment, and to believe, and do in religion according to the will of your superiors; will you be wiser than they? Some of the rulers did embrace Christ, *Matt. ix. 18. John iv. 53.* and more believed in him, but wanted courage to confess him, *John xii. 42.* but when the interest of Christ runs low in the world, it is common for its adversaries to represent it as lower than really it is. But it was too true, that few, very few, of them did. Note, 1. The cause of Christ hath seldom had rulers and Pharisees on its side. It needs not secular supports, nor proposes secular advantages, and therefore



therefore neither courts, nor is courted by the great men of this world: *Self-denial*, and the *cross*, are hard lessons to rulers and *Pharisees*. 2. This has confirmed many in their prejudices against Christ and his gospel, that the rulers and Pharisees have been no friends to them. Shall *secular* men pretend to be more concerned about *spiritual* things, than spiritual men themselves? Or to see further into religion than those who make its study their profession? If *rulers* and *Pharisees* do not believe in Christ, they that do believe in him, will be the most singular, unfashionable, ungenteel people in the world, and quite out of the way of preferment; thus are people foolishly swayed by *external motives*, in matters of *eternal moment*, are willing to be damned for fashion sake, and to go to hell in a compliment to the *rulers* and *Pharisees*.

2. That they will link themselves with the despicable, vulgar sort of people, *ver. 49. But this people who know not the law are cursed*; meaning especially, those that were well-affected to the doctrine of Christ. Observe,

1. How scornfully and disdainfully they call them; *this people*. It is not, *λαός*, this *lay-people*, distinguished from them that were the clergy, but *ὄχλος ἄτακτος*, this *rabble people*, this pitiful scandalous, scoundrel people, whom they disdained to *set with the dogs of their flock*, though God had set them with the lambs of his. If they mean the *commonalty of the Jewish nation*, they were the seed of Abraham, and in covenant with God, and not to be spoken of with such contempt: The church's common interests are betrayed, when any one part of it studies to render the other mean and despicable. If they mean the *followers of Christ*, though they were generally persons of small figure, and fortune, yet by owning Christ, they discovered such a sagacity, integrity, and interest in the favours of heaven, as made them truly great and considerable. Note, As the wisdom of God hath often chosen base things, and things which are despised, so the folly of men has commonly debased and despised those whom God has chosen.

2. How unjustly they reproach them as ignorant of the word of God; they *know not the law*; as if none knew the law but those that knew it *from them*; and no scripture knowledge were current, but what came out of their mint; and as if none knew the law but such as were observant of their canons and traditions. Perhaps many of those whom they thus despised, *knew the law*, and the prophets too better than they did. Many a plain, honest, unlearned disciple of Christ, by meditation, experience, prayers, and especially obedience, attains to a more clear, sound, and useful knowledge of the word of God, than some great scholars with all their wit and learning: Thus David came to understand *more than the ancients*, and *all his teachers*, *Psal. cxix. 99, 100*. If the common people did not *know the law*, yet the chief priests and Pharisees, of all men, should not have upbraided them with it; for whose fault was it but theirs, who should have *taught them better*; but instead of that, *took away the key of knowledge*, *Luke xi. 52*.

3. How magisterially they pronounce sentence upon them; they are *cursed*; hateful to God, and all wise men; *ἐπικαταραμένοι*, an *execrable* people. It is well their saying they were cursed did not make them so, for the *curse causeless shall not come*. It is an usurpation of God's prerogative, as well as great uncharitableness, to say of any particular persons, much more of any body of people, that they are reprobates: We are unable to try, and therefore unfit to condemn, and our rule is, *blest, and curse not*. Some think they mean no more, but they are *apt to be deceived*, and *made fools of*, but they use this odious word, they are *cursed*, to express their own indignation, and to frighten their officers from having any thing to do with them; thus the language of hell in our profane age, calls every thing that is displeasing, *cursed*, and *damned*, and *confounded*. Now for ought appears, these officers had their convictions baffled, and stifled by these suggestions, and they never enquire further after Christ; one word from a *ruler* or *Pharisee*, will sway more with many, than the true reason of things, and the great interests of their souls.

Secondly, What passed between them and Nicodemus, a member of their own body, *ver. 50, &c.* Observe,

1. The just and rational objection which Nicodemus made against their proceedings. Even in their corrupt and wicked Sanhedrin, God left not himself quite *without witness* against their enmity; nor was the vote against Christ carried *nemine contradicente*. Observe,

1. Who it was that appeared against them; it was Nicodemus, *He that came to Jesus by night being one of them, ver. 50*. Observe, concerning him, 1. That though he had been with Jesus, and taken him for a teacher, yet he retained his place in the council, and his vote among them: Some impute this to his *weakness* and cowardice, and think it was his fault that he did not quit his place; but Christ had never said to him *follow me*, else he would have done as others, that left all to follow him; therefore it seems rather to have been his *wisdom*, not presently to throw up his place, because there he might have opportunity of serving Christ and his interest, and stemming the tide of the Jewish rage, which perhaps he did more than we are aware of. He might there be as Hushai among Absalom's counsellors, instrumental to *turn their counsels into foolishness*. Though we must

in no case deny our Master, yet we may wait for an opportunity of confessing him to the best advantage. God has his remnant among all sorts; and many times finds, or puts, or makes, some good in the worst places and societies: There was Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court, and Nehemiah in Artaxerxes. 2. That though at first he came to Jesus *by night* for fear of being known, and still continued in his post; yet when there was occasion, he boldly appeared in defence of Christ, and opposed the whole council that were set against him. Thus many believers, who at first were timorous, and ready to *flee at the shaking of a leaf*, have at length, by divine grace, grown courageous, and able to *laugh at the shaking of a spear*. Let none justify the disguising of their faith by the example of Nicodemus, unless like him, they be ready upon the first occasion openly to appear in the cause of Christ, though they stand alone in it, for so Nicodemus did here, and *John xix. 39*.

2. What he alledged against their proceedings, *ver. 51. Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, (ἀκούσῃ παρ' αὐτῶν, hear from himself) and know what he doth?* By no means, nor doth the law of any civilized nation allow it. Observe,

(1.) He prudently argues from the principles of their own law, and an incontestable rule of justice, that no man is to be condemned *unheard*. Had he urged the excellency of Christ's doctrine, or the evidence of his miracles, or repeated to them his divine discourse with him, *chap. iii.* it had been but to *cast pearls before swine*, who would *trample them under their feet*, and would *turn again and rent him*; therefore he waves them.

(2.) Whereas they had reproached the people, especially the followers of Christ as *ignorant of the law*. He here tacitly retorts the charge upon themselves, and shews how ignorant they were of some of the first principles of the law, so unfit were they to give law to others.

(3.) The law is here said to *judge* and *hear*, and *know*, when magistrates that govern, and are governed by it, *judge*, and *hear*, and *know*, for they are the *mouth of the law*, and whatsoever they bind and loose according to the law, is justly said to be bound and loosed by the law.

(4.) It is highly fit that none should come under the *sentence* of the law, till they have first, by a fair trial, undergone the *scrutiny* of it. Judges, when they receive the complaints of the accuser, must always reserve in their minds room for the defence of the accused; for they have two ears, to mind them to hear both sides; this is said to be the manner of the Romans, *Acts xxv. 18*. The method of our law is *Oyer and Terminer*, first to *hear*, and then to *determine*.

(5.) Persons are to be judged not by what is *said* of them, but by what they *do*; *our law* will not ask what mens opinions are of them, or out-cries against them, but what have they done? What *overt-acts* can they be convicted of. Sentence must be given, *secundum allegata & probata*. Facts, and not faces, must be known in judgment; and the *scale* of justice must be used before the *sword* of justice.

Now we may suppose the motion Nicodemus made in the house upon this, was, That Jesus should be desired to come and give them an account of himself and his doctrine. and they should favour him with an impartial, unprejudiced hearing; but though none of them could gain say his maxim, none of them would second his motion.

2. What was said to this objection. Here is no direct reply given to it, but when they could not resist the force of his argument, they fell foul upon him, and what was to seek in *reason*, they made up in railing and reproach. Note, It is a sign of a bad cause, when men cannot bear to *hear reason*, and take it as an affront to be minded of its maxims: Whoever are *against reason*, give cause to suspect that *reason* is *against them*. See how they taunt him, *Art thou also of Galilee?* *ver. 52*. Some think he was well enough served for continuing among them, whom he knew to be enemies to Christ, and for his speaking no more on the behalf of Christ, than what he might have said on behalf of the greatest criminal; that he should not be condemned unheard. Had he said, as for this Jesus, I have heard him my self, and know he is a *teacher come from God*, and you in opposing him, fight against God, as he ought to have said, he could not have been worse abused, than he was for this feeble effort of his tenderness for Christ.

As to what they said to Nicodemus, we may observe,

(1.) How *false* the grounds of their arguing are, for, (1.) They suppose that Christ was of Galilee, and that was false, and if they would have been at the pains of an impartial enquiry, they might have found it so. (2.) They suppose, that because most of his disciples were Galileans, they were all such, whereas he had abundance of disciples in Judea. (3.) They suppose that out of Galilee no prophet had *risen*, and for this appeals to Nicodemus's search; yet this was false too, Jonah was of Gath-hepher, Nahum an Elkoshite, both of Galilee: Thus do they *make lies their refuge*.

(2.) How *absurd* their arguings were upon these grounds, such as were a shame to *rulers* and *Pharisees*. (1.) Is any man of worth and virtue ever the worse for the poverty and obscurity of his country? The Galileans were the seed of Abraham; Barbarians and Scythians are the seed of Adam, and *have we not all* *ens*



one Father? (2.) Supposing no prophet had risen out of Galilee, yet it is not impossible that any should arise thence. If Elijah was the first prophet of Gilead, as perhaps he was; and if the Gileadites were called *fugitives*, must it therefore be questioned whether he were a prophet or no?

3. The hasty adjournment of the court hereupon, they broke up the assembly in confusion, and with precipitation, and *every man went to his own house*. They met to take counsel together against the Lord, and his anointed, but they imagined a vain thing; and not only he that sits in heaven laughed at them, but we may sit on earth and laugh at them too, to see all the politicks of the close cabal broken to pieces with one plain, honest word. They were not willing to hear Nicodemus, because they could not answer him. As soon as they perceived they had one such man among them, they saw it was to no purpose to go on with their design, and therefore put off the debate to a more convenient season, when he was absent. Thus the counsel of the Lord is made to stand, in spite of the devices in the hearts of men.

## C H A P. VIII.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's evading the snare which the Jews laid for him, in bringing to him a woman taken in adultery, ver. 1—11. 2. Divers discourses, or conferences of his with the Jews that cavilled at him, and sought occasion against him, and made every thing he said a matter of a controversy. (1.) Concerning his being the light of the world, ver. 12—20. (2.) Concerning the ruin of the unbelieving Jews, ver. 21—30. (3.) Concerning liberty and bondage, ver. 31—37. (4.) Concerning his Father and their Father, ver. 38—47. (5.) Here is his discourse in answer to their blasphemous reproaches, ver. 48—50. (6.) Concerning the immortality of believers, ver. 51—59. And in all this he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself.

1. JESUS went unto the mount of olives: 2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down and taught them. 3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, 4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. 7. So when they continued asking him, he lift up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10. When Jesus had lift up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Though Christ was basely abused in the foregoing chapter, both by the rulers, and by the people, yet here we have him still at Jerusalem, still in the temple; how often would he have gathered them! Observe,

1. His retirement in the evening out of the town, ver. 1. He went unto the mount of Olives; whether to some friend's house, or to some booth pitched there, now at the feast of tabernacles, is not certain; whether he rested there, or as some think, continued all night in prayer to God, we are not told. But he went out of Jerusalem, perhaps, because he had never a friend there that had either kindness, or courage enough to give him a night's lodging, while his persecutors had houses of their own to go to, chap. vii. ult. he could not so much as borrow a place to lay his head on, but what he must go a mile or two out of town for. He retired, (as some think) because he would not expose himself to the peril of a popular tumult in the night: It is prudence to go out of the way of danger, whenever we can do it without going out of the way of duty. In the day-time, when he had work to do in the temple, he willingly exposed himself, and was under special protection, Isa. xlix. 2. But in the night, when he had not work to do, he withdrew into the country, and sheltered himself there.

2. His return in the morning to the temple, and to his work there, ver. 2. Observe here,

(1.) What a diligent preacher Christ was; *Early in the morning he came again and taught*. Though he had been teaching the day before, he taught again to day: Christ was a constant preacher, in season and out of season. Three things are taken notice of here concerning Christ's preaching. 1. The time; *early in the morning*. Though he lodged out of town, and perhaps had spent much of the night in secret prayer, yet he came early. When a day's work is to be done for God and souls, it is good to begin betimes, and take the day before us. 2. The place, in the temple; not so much because it was a consecrated place, for then he would have chosen it at other times, as because it was now a place of concourse. And he would hereby countenance solemn assemblies for religious worship, and encourage people to come up to the temple, for he had not yet left it desolate. 3. His posture, he sat down and taught, as one having authority; and as one that intended to abide by it for some time.

(2.) How diligently his preaching was attended upon. *All the people came unto him*; and perhaps many of them were the country people, who were this day to return home from the feast, and were desirous to hear one sermon more from the mouth of Christ before they returned. They came to him, though he came early. They that seek him early, shall find him. Though the rulers were displeased at those that came to hear him, yet they would come; and he taught them, though they were angry at him too. Though there were few or none among them that were persons of any figure, yet Christ bid them welcome, and taught them.

3. His dealing with those that brought to him the woman taken in adultery, tempting him. The Scribes and Pharisees would not only not hear Christ patiently themselves, but they disturbed him when the people were attending on him. Observe here,

First, The case proposed to him by the Scribes and Pharisees, who herein contrived to pick a quarrel with him, and bring him into a snare, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6.

1. They set the prisoner to the bar, ver. 3. they brought him a woman taken in adultery; perhaps now lately taken, during the time of the feast of tabernacles, when it may be their dwelling in booths, and their feasting and joy might by wicked minds, which corrupt the best things, be made occasions of sin. Those that were taken in adultery, were by the Jewish law to be put to death, which the Roman powers allowed them the execution of, and therefore she was brought before the ecclesiastical court. Observe, she was taken in her adultery; though adultery is a work of darkness, which the criminals commonly take all the care they can to conceal, yet sometimes it is strangely brought to light. Those that promise themselves secrecy in sin, deceive themselves. The Scribes and Pharisees bring her to Christ, and set her in the midst of the assembly, as if they would leave her wholly to the judgment of Christ, he having sat down, as a judge upon the bench.

2. They prefer an indictment against her, ver. 4. Master, this woman was taken in adultery. Here they call him Master, whom but the day before, they had called a deceiver; in hopes with their flatteries to have ensnared him, as those, Luke xx. 20. But though men may be imposed upon with compliments, he that searcheth the heart cannot.

(1.) The crime for which the prisoner stands indicted, is no less than adultery; which even in the patriarchal age before the law of Moses, was looked upon as an iniquity to be punished by the judges, Job xxxi. 9, 11. Gen. xxxviii. 24. The Pharisees, by their vigorous prosecution of this offender, seemed to have a great zeal against the sin, when it appeared afterwards that they themselves were not free from it; nay they were within full of all uncleanness, Matt. xxiii. 27, 28. Note, It is common for those that are indulgent to their own sin, to be severe against the sins of others.

(2.) The proof of the crime was from the notorious evidence of the fact; an incontestable proof, she was taken in the act, so that there was no room left to plead not guilty; had she not been taken in this act, she might have gone on to another; till her heart had been perfectly hardened, but sometimes it proves a mercy to sinners to have their sin brought to light, that they may do no more presumptuously. Better our sin should shame us, than damn us; and be set in order before us for our conviction, than for our condemnation.

3. They produce the statute in this case made and provided, and upon which she was indicted, ver. 5. Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned. Moses commanded that they should be put to death, Lev. xx. 10. Deut. xxii. 22. but not that they should be stoned, unless the adulterers was espoused, not married, or was a priest's daughter, Deut. xxii. 21. Note, Adultery is an exceeding sinful sin, for it is the rebellion of a vile lust, not only against the command, but against the covenant of our God. It is the violation of a divine institution in innocency, by the indulgence of one of the basest lusts of man in his degeneracy.

4. They pray his judgment in the case. But what sayest thou? who pretendest to be a teacher come from God to repeal old laws, and enact new ones; what hast thou to say in this case. If they had asked this question in sincerity with a humble desire to know his mind, it had been very commendable. They that are entrusted with



with the administration of justice, should look up to Christ for direction; but *this they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him*, ver. 6. (1.) If he should confirm the sentence of the law, and let it take its course, they would censure him as inconsistent with himself, he having received publicans and harlots, and with the character of the Messiah, who should be meek, and have salvation, and proclaim a year of release, and perhaps they would accuse him to the Roman governor, for countenancing the Jews in the exercise of a judicial power. But, (2.) If he should acquit her, and give his opinion that the sentence should not be executed, as they expected he would, they would represent him, 1. As an enemy to the law of Moses, and as one that usurped an authority to correct and controul it, and would confirm that prejudice against him, which his enemies were so industrious to propagate, that he came to *destroy the law and the prophets*. 2. As a friend to sinners, and consequently a favourer of sin; if he should seem to connive at such wickedness, and let it go unpunished, they would represent him as countenancing it, and being a patron of offences, if he were a protector of offenders; than which no reflexion could be more invidious upon one that professed the strictness, purity and business of a prophet.

Secondly, The method he took to resolve this case, and so to break this snare.

1. He seemed to slight it, and turned a deaf ear to it, he *stooped down, and wrote on the ground*. It is impossible to tell, and therefore needless to ask what he wrote; but it is the only mention made in the gospels of Christ's writings; Eusebius indeed speaks of his writing to Abgarus, king of Edessa. Some think they have a liberty of conjecture what he wrote here. Grotius saith it was some grave weighty saying, and that it was usual for wise men, when they were very thoughtful concerning any thing, to do so. Jerom and Ambrose suppose he wrote, *Let the names of these wicked men be written in the dust*. Others this, *The earth accuseth the earth, but the judgment is mine*. Christ by this teacheth us to be slow to speak, when difficult cases are proposed to us, not quickly to shoot our bolt; and when provocations are given us, or we are bantered; to pause and consider before we reply; think twice before we speak once; *The art of the wise studies to answer*. Our Translation from some Greek copies, which add, *μη προσποιούμενος*, (though the most copies have it not) give this account of the reason of his writing on the ground, *as though he heard them not*. He did as it were, look another way, to shew that he was not willing to take notice of their address, saying in effect, *Who made me a judge or a divider?* It is safe in many cases to be deaf, to that which it is not safe to answer, *Psal. xxxviii. 13*. Christ would not have his ministers to be entangled in secular affairs; let them rather employ themselves in any lawful studies, and fill up their time with writing on the ground, which no body will heed, than busy themselves in that which doth not belong to them. But when Christ seemed, as though he heard them not, he made it appear that he not only heard their words, but knew their thoughts.

2. When they importunately, or rather impertinently pressed him for an answer, he turned the conviction of the prisoner upon the prosecutors, ver. 7.

1. They continued asking him, and his seeming not to take notice of them, made them the more vehement, for now they thought sure enough they had run him aground, and that he could not avoid the imputation of contradicting either the law of Moses, if he could acquit the prisoner, or his own doctrine of mercy and pardon if he should condemn her; and therefore they pushed on their appeal to him with vigour; whereas they should have construed his disregard of them, as a check to their design, and an intimation to them to desist, as they tendered their own reputation.

2. At last he put them all to shame and silence with one word, *He lift up himself*, awaking as one out of sleep, *Psal. lxxviii. 65*. and said unto them, *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her*.

1. Here Christ avoided the snare which they had laid for him, and effectually saved his own reputation. He neither reflected upon the law, nor excused the prisoner's guilt; nor did he on the other hand encourage the prosecution, or countenance their heat; see the good effect of consideration. When we cannot make our point by steering a direct course, it is good to fetch a compass.

2. In the net which they spread is their own souls taken. They came with design to accuse him, but they were forced to accuse themselves. Christ owns it was fit the prisoner should be prosecuted, but appeals to their consciences, whether they were fit to be the prosecutors.

1. He here refers to that rule, which the law of Moses prescribed in the execution of criminals, that the *hand of the witnesses must be first upon them*, Deut. xvii. 7. as in the stoning of Stephen, Acts vii. 58. The scribes and Pharisees were the witnesses against this woman. Now Christ puts it to them, whether according to their own law they would dare to be the executioners. Durst they take away that life with their hands, which they were now taking away with their tongues; would not their own consciences fly in their faces if they did?

2. He builds upon an uncontested maxim in morality, that it is very absurd for men to be zealous in punishing the offences of others, while they are every whit as guilty themselves, and they are not better than self-condemned who judge others, and yet them-

selves do the same thing. If there be any of you that is *without sin*, i. e. without sin of this nature, that has not some time or other been guilty of fornication or adultery, let him cast the first stone at her. Not that magistrates, who are conscious of guilt themselves, should therefore connive at others guilt. But therefore, 1. Whenever we find fault with others, we ought to reflect upon our selves, and to be more severe against sin in our selves than in others. 2. We ought to be favourable, though not to the sins, yet to the persons of those that offend, and to restore them with a *spirit of meekness*, considering our selves and our own corrupt nature. *Aut sumus, aut fuimus, vel possumus esse quod hic est*. Let this restrain us from throwing stones at our brethren, and proclaiming their faults; Let him that is without sin, begin such discourse as that, and then those that are truly humbled for their own sins, will blush at it, and be glad to let it fall. 3. Those who are any way obliged to animadvert upon the faults of others are concerned to look well to themselves, and keep themselves pure; *Matt. vii. 5. Qui alterum incusat probri, ipsum se intueri oportet*. The snuffers of the tabernacle were of pure gold.

3. Perhaps he refers to the trial of the suspected wife by the jealous husband, with the waters of jealousy. The man was to bring her to the priest, Num. v. 15. as the scribes and Pharisees brought this woman to Christ. Now it was a received opinion among the Jews, and confirmed by experience, that if the husband who brought his wife to that trial, had himself been at any time guilty of adultery, *Aquæ non explorant ejus uxorem*: The bitter water had no effect upon the wife; come then, saith Christ, according to your own tradition will I judge you, if you are without sin, stand to the charge, and let the adulteress be executed; but if not, though she be guilty, while you that present her are equally so, according to your own rule she shall be free.

4. In this he attended to the great work which he came into the world about, and that was to bring sinners to repentance; not to destroy, but so to save. He aimed to bring, not only the prisoner to repentance, by shewing her his mercy, but the prosecutors too, by shewing them their sins; they thought to ensnare him, he sought to convince and convert them. Thus *the blood-thirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul*.

3. Having given them this startling word, he left them to consider of it, and again stooped down and wrote upon the ground, ver. 8. As when they made their address, he seemed to slight their question, so now he had given them an answer, he slighted their resentment of it; not caring what they said to it; nay, they needed not to make any reply; the matter was lodged in their own breasts, let them make the best of it there. Or, he would not seem to wait for an answer, lest they should on a sudden justify themselves, and then think themselves bound in honour to persist in it; but gives them time to pause, and to commune with their own hearts. God saith, *I hearkened and heard*, Jer. viii. 6. Some Greek copies here read, *He wrote on the ground, ἐν τῷ ἱματίῳ αὐτοῦ τὰς ἀμαρτίας, the sins of every one of them*; this he could do, for he sets our iniquities before him; and this he will do, for he will, set them in order before us too; he seals up our transgressions, Job xiv. 16. But he doth not write mens sins in the sand, no, they are written as with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond, Jer. xvii. 1. never to be forgotten till they are forgiven.

4. The scribes and Pharisees were so strangely thunder-struck with the word of Christ, that they let fall their persecution of Christ, whom they durst no further tempt; and their persecution of the woman, whom they durst no longer accuse; ver. 9. *They went out one by one*. (1.) Perhaps his writing on the ground frightened them, as the hand-writing on the wall frightened Belshazzar. They concluded he was writing bitter things against them, writing their doom: Happy they who have no reason to be afraid of Christ's writing! (2.) However, what he said frightened them, by sending them to their own consciences, he had shewed them to themselves, and they were afraid if they should stay till he lift up himself again, his next word would shew them to the world, and shame them before men, and therefore they thought it best to withdraw. They went out one by one, that they might go out softly, and not by a noisy flight disturb Christ; they gat them away by stealth, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle, 2 Sam. xix. 3. The order of their departure is taken notice of, beginning at the eldest, either because they were most guilty, or first aware of the danger they were in of being put to the blush: And if the eldest quit the field, and retreat ingloriously, no marvel if the younger follow them. Now see here,

(1.) The force of the word of Christ for the conviction of sinners: *They which heard it were convicted by their own consciences*. Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, and one word from him will set it on work, Heb. iv. 12. Those that had been old in adulteries, and long fixed in a proud opinion of themselves, yet the eldest of them were here startled by the word of Christ, even scribes and Pharisees, that were most conceited of themselves, yet by the power of Christ's word are made to sneak.

(2.) The folly of sinners under these convictions, which appears in these scribes and Pharisees. (1.) It is folly for those that are under convictions, to make it their principal care to avoid shame, as Judah, Gen. xxxviii. 23. *lest we be shamed*. Our care should be more to save our souls, than to save our credit. Saul evidenced his hypocrisy, when he said, *I have sinned, yet now honour me I pray thee*.



thee. There is no way to get the honour and comfort of penitents, but by taking the shame of penitents. (2.) It is folly for those that are under convictions, to contrive how to shift off their convictions, and to get rid of them. The Scribes and Pharisees had the wound opened, and now they should have been desirous to have it searched, and then it might have been healed, but that was the thing they dreaded and declined. (3.) It is folly for those that are under convictions to get away from Jesus Christ, as these here did, for he is the only one that can heal the wounds of conscience, and speak peace to us. Those that are convicted by their consciences, will be condemned by their Judge, if they be not justified by their Redeemer; and will they then go from him? To whom will they go?

5. When the self-conceited prosecutors quitted the field, and fled for the same, the self-condemning prisoner stood her ground, with a resolution to abide by the judgment of our Lord Jesus. Jesus was left alone from the company of the scribes and Pharisees, free from their molestations, and the woman standing in the midst of the assembly that were attending on Christ's preaching, where they set her, ver. 3. she did not seek to make her escape, though she had opportunity for it, but her prosecutors had appealed unto Jesus, and to him she would go, on him she would wait for her doom. Note, Those whose cause is brought before our Lord Jesus, will never have occasion to remove it into any other court, for he is the refuge of penitents. The law which accuses us, and calls for judgment against us, is by the gospel of Christ made to withdraw, its demands are answered, and its clamours silenced by the blood of Jesus: Our cause is lodged in the gospel-court; we are left with Jesus alone, it is him only we have now to deal with, for to him all judgment is committed; let us therefore secure our interest in him, and we are made for ever. Let his gospel rule us, and it will infallibly save us.

6. Here is the conclusion of the trial, and the issue it was brought to, ver. 10, 11. Jesus lift up himself, and he saw none but the woman. Though Christ may seem to take no notice of what is said and done, but leave it to the contending sons of men to deal it out among themselves, yet when the hour of his judgment is come, he will no longer keep silence. When David had appealed to God, he prayed, lift up thy self, Psal. vii. 6. and xciv. 2. The woman, it is likely, stood trembling at the bar, as one doubtful of the issue. Christ was without sin, and might cast the first stone; but though none more severe than he against sin, for he is infinitely just and holy, none more compassionate than he to sinners, for he is infinitely gracious and merciful, and this poor malefactor finds him so, now she stands upon her deliverance.

Here is the method of the courts of judicature observed,

1. The prosecutors are called, *Where are those thine accusers?* Hath no man condemned thee? Not but that Christ knew where they were, but he asked, that he might shame them who declined his judgment, and encourage her who resolved to abide by it. St. Paul's challenge is like this, *Whoso shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Where are these their accusers? The accuser of the brethren shall be fairly cast out, and all indictments legally and regularly quashed.

2. They do not appear when the question was asked, *Hath no man condemned thee?* she said, *No man, Lord.* She speaks respectfully to Christ, calls him Lord, but is silent concerning her prosecutors, saith nothing in answer to that question which concerned them, *Where are those thine accusers?* doth not triumph in their retreat, or insult over them, as witnesses against themselves, not against her. If we hope to be forgiven by our judge, we must forgive our accusers; and if their accusations, how invidious soever, were the happy occasion of awakening our consciences, we may easily forgive them this wrong. But she answered the question which concerned her self, *Has no man condemned thee?* True penitents find it enough to give account of themselves to God, and will not undertake to give account of other people.

3. The prisoner is therefore discharged, *Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.* Consider this,

1. As her discharge from the temporal punishment; if they do not condemn thee to be stoned to death, neither do I. Not that Christ came to disarm the magistrate of his sword of justice, or that it is his will that capital punishments should not be inflicted on malefactors; so far from that, the administration of publick justice is established by the gospel, and made subservient to Christ's kingdom; by me kings reign. But Christ would not condemn this woman, (1.) Because it was none of his business, he was no judge, or divider, and therefore would not intermeddle in secular affairs. His kingdom was not of this world. *Trahitent fabrilis fabri.* (2.) Because she was prosecuted by those that were more guilty than she, and could not for shame, insist upon their demand of justice against her. This law appointed the hands of the witnesses to be first upon the criminal, and afterwards the hands of all the people, so that if they fly off, and do not condemn her, the prosecution drops. The justice of God in inflicting temporal judgments, sometimes takes notice of a comparative righteousness, and spares those who are otherwise obnoxious, when the punishing of them would gratify those that are worse than they, Deut. xxxii. 26. But when Christ dismissed her, it was with this caution, *go and sin no more.* Impunity emboldens malefactors, and therefore those who are guilty, and yet have found means to escape the edge of

the law, need to double their watch, lest Satan get advantage; for the fairer the escape was, the fairer the warning was to go and sin no more. They who help to save the life of a criminal, should, as Christ here, help to save the soul with this caution.

2. As her discharge from the eternal punishment. For Christ to say, I do not condemn thee, is in effect to say, I do forgive thee; and the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, and could, upon good grounds, give this absolution, for as he knew the hardness and impenitent hearts of the prosecutors, and therefore said that which would confound them; so he knew the tenderness and sincere repentance of the prisoner, and therefore said that which would comfort her, as he did to that woman that was a sinner, such a sinner as this; who was likewise looked upon with disdain by a Pharisee, Luke vii. 48. *Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.* So here, *Neither do I condemn thee.* Note, 1. They are truly happy whom Christ doth not condemn, for his discharge is a sufficient answer to all other challenges; they are all *coram non judice.* 2. Christ will not condemn those, who, though they have sinned, will go and sin no more, Psal. lxxxv. 8. Isa. lv. 7. He will not take the advantage he has against us for our former rebellions, if we will but lay down our arms and return to our allegiance. 3. Christ's favour to us in the remission of the sins that are past, should be a prevailing argument with us to go and sin no more, Rom. vi. 1, 2. Will not Christ condemn thee? Go then and sin no more.

12. ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thy self; thy record is not true. 14. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of my self, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15. Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man. 16. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18. I am one that bear witness of my self, and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me. 19. Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. 20. These words spake Jesus in the treasury as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come.

The rest of the chapter is taken up with debates between Christ and contradicting sinners, who cavilled at the most gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. It is not certain whether these disputes were the same day that the adulteress was discharged, it is probable they were, for the evangelist mentions no other day, and takes notice, ver. 2. how early Christ began that day's work. Though those Pharisees that accused the woman were absconded, yet there were other Pharisees, ver. 13. to confront Christ, who had brass enough in their foreheads to keep them in countenance, though some of their party were put to such a shameful retreat; nay, perhaps that made them the more industrious to pick quarrels with him; if possible, to retrieve the reputation of their baffled party.

In these verses we have,

1. A great doctrine laid down, with the application of it.

(1.) The doctrine is, *That Christ is the light of the world;* ver. 12. Then spake Jesus again unto them; though he had spoken a great deal to them to little purpose, and what he had said was opposed, yet he spake again, for he speaketh once, yea twice: They had turned a deaf ear to what he said, and yet he spoke again to them, saying, *I am the light of the world.* Note, Jesus Christ is the light of the world. One of the Rabbies saith, *Light* is the name of the Messiah, as it is written, Dan. ii. 22. *And light dwelleth with him.* God is light, and Christ is the image of the invisible God; God of gods, light of lights. He was expected to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, Luke ii. 22. and so the light of the world, and not of the Jewish church only. The visible light of the world is the sun, and Christ is the sun of righteousness: One sun enlightens the whole world, so doth one Christ, and there needs no more. Christ's being the light speaks, (1.) What he is in himself, most excellent and glorious. (2.) What he is to the world, the fountain of light, enlightning every man. What a dungeon would the world be without the? Sun so would it be without Christ, by whom light came into the world, John iii. 19.

(2.) The inference from this doctrine is, *He that followeth me as a traveller follows the light in a dark night, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* If Christ be the light, then,

1. It is our duty to follow him, to submit our selves to his conduct, and in every thing take directions from him, in the way that leads



leads to happiness. Many follow *false lights*; there are *ignes fatui* that lead them to destruction; but Christ is the *true light*. It is not enough to look at this light, and to gaze upon it, but we must follow it, believe in it, and walk in it, for it is a light to our feet, not our eyes only.

2. It is the happiness of those who follow Christ, that they shall not walk in darkness. They shall not be left destitute of those instructions in the way of truth, which are necessary to keep them from destroying error, and those directions in the way of duty, which are necessary to keep them from damning sin. They shall have the *light of life*, that knowledge and enjoyment of God, which will be to them the light of *spiritual* life in this world, and of everlasting life in the other world, where there will be no death nor darkness. Follow Christ, and we shall undoubtedly be happy in both worlds: Follow Christ, and we shall follow him to heaven.

2. The objection which the Pharisees made against this doctrine, and it was very trifling and frivolous, *ver. 13. Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.* In this objection they went upon the suspicion which we commonly have of mens *self-commendation*, which is concluded to be the native language of *self-love*, such as we are all ready to condemn in others, but few are willing to own in themselves. But in this case the objection was very unjust, for, (1.) They made that his crime, and a diminution to the credibility of his doctrine, which in the case of one who introduced a divine revelation, was necessary and unavoidable. Did not Moses and all the prophets bear witness of themselves, when they avouched themselves to be God's messengers? Did not the Pharisees ask John Baptist, what sayest thou of thyself? (2.) They overlooked the testimony of all the other witnesses, which corroborated the testimony he bore of himself. Had he only born record of himself, his testimony had indeed been suspicious, and the belief of it might have been suspended, but his doctrine was attested by more than two or three credible witnesses, enough to establish every word of it.

3. Christ's reply to this objection, *ver. 14. He doth not retort upon them, as he might; you profess yourselves to be devout and good men, but your witness is not true, but plainly vindicates himself; and though he had waved his own testimony, chap. v. 31. yet here he abides by it, that it did not derogate from the credibility of his other proofs, but was necessary to shew the force of them. He is the light of the world, and it is the property of light to be self-evidencing: First principles prove themselves.*

He urgeth three things to prove that his testimony, though of himself, was true and cogent.

1. That he was conscious to himself of his own authority, and abundantly satisfied in himself concerning it. He did not speak as one at uncertainty, nor propose a disputable notion which he himself hesitated about, but declared a decree, and gave such an account of himself as he would abide by; *I know whence I come, and whither I go.* He was fully apprised of his own undertaking from first to last; knew whose errand he went upon, and what his success would be; he knew what he was before his manifestation to the world, and what he should be after; that he came from the Father, and was going to him, John xvi. 28. came from glory, and was going to glory, John xvii. 5. This is the satisfaction of all good Christians, that though the world know them not, as it knew him not, yet they know whence their spiritual life comes, and whether it tends, and go upon sure grounds.

2. That they were very incompetent judges of him, and of his doctrine, and not to be regarded.

(1.) Because they were ignorant willingly, and resolvedly ignorant; ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. To what purpose is it to talk with those who know nothing of the matter, nor desire to know. He had told them of his coming from heaven, and returning to heaven, but it was foolishness to them, they received it not, it was what the brutish man knows not, Psal xcii. 6. They took upon them to judge of that which they did not understand, which lay quite out of the road of their acquaintance. They that despise Christ's dominions and dignities, speak evil of what they know not, Jude 8, 10.

(2.) Because they were partial, *ver. 15. Ye judge after the flesh.* When fleshly wisdom gives the rule of judgment, and outward shews and appearances only are given in evidence, and the case decided according to them, then men judge after the flesh, and when the consideration of a secular interest turns the scale in judging of spiritual matters; when we judge in favour of that which pleases the carnal mind, and recommends us to a carnal world, we judge after the flesh; and the judgment cannot be right when the rule is wrong. The Jews judged of Christ and his gospel by outward appearances, and because he appeared so mean, thought it impossible he should be the light of the world; as if the sun, under a cloud, were no sun.

(3.) Because they were unjust and unfair towards him, intimated in that, *I judge no man.* I neither make nor meddle with our political affairs, nor doth my doctrine or practice at all trench upon, or interfere with your civil rights, or secular powers; he thus judged no man; now if he did not war after the flesh, it was very unreasonable for them to judge him after the flesh; and to treat him as an offender against the civil govern-

ment. Or, *I judge no man*, i. e. not now, in my first coming, that is deferred till I come again, John iii. 17. *Prima dispensatio Christi medicinalis est, non judicialis.* Aug.

3. That his testimony of himself was sufficiently supported and corroborated by the testimony of his Father with him, and for him, *ver. 16. And if I judge, my judgment is true.* He did in his doctrine judge, John ix. 39. though not politically. Consider him then,

1. As a judge, and his own judgment was valid. *If I judge*, I who have authority to execute judgments, I to whom all things are delivered, I who am the Son of God, and have the Spirit of God, if I judge, *my judgment is true*, of incontestable rectitude, and uncontrollable authority, Rom. ii. 2. *If I should judge*, my judgment must be true, and then you would be condemned; but the judgment-day is not yet come, you are not yet to be condemned, but spared, and therefore now *I judge no man*; so Chrysostom.

Now that which makes his judgment unexceptionable, is,

(1.) His Father's concurrence with him, *I am not alone, but I and the Father.* He had the Father's concurring counsels to direct; as he was with the Father before the world in forming the counsels, so the Father was with him in the world in prosecuting and executing those counsels, and never left him, *Inops consilii*, Isa. xi. 2. All the counsels of peace (and of war too) were between them both, Zech. vi. 13. He had also the Father's concurring power to authorize and confirm what he did; see Psal. lxxxix. 21, &c. Isa. xlii. 1. He did not act separately, but in his own name, and his Father's, and by the authority aforesaid, John v. 17. and xiv. 9, 10.

(2.) His Father's commission to him, it is the Father that sent me. Note, God will go along with them that he sends; see Exod. iii. 10, 12. *Come, and I will send thee, and certainly I will be with thee.* Now if Christ had a commission from the Father, and the Father's presence with him in all his administrations, no doubt his judgment was true and valid; no exception lay against it, no appeal lay from it.

2. Look upon him as a witness, and now he appeared no otherwise (having not as yet taken the throne of judgment). and as such his testimony was true, and unexceptionable; this he shews *ver. 17, 18. where,*

1. He quotes a maxim of the Jewish law, *ver. 17. That the testimony of two men is true.* Not as if it were always true in itself, for many a time hand was joined in hand to bear a false testimony, 1 Kings xxi. 10. But it is allowed, as sufficient evidence, upon which to ground a verdict (*verum dictum*) and if nothing appear to the contrary, it is taken for granted to be true. Reference is here had to that law, Deut. xvii. 6. *At the mouth of two witnesses shall he that is worthy of death be put to death.* And see Deut. xix. 5. Numb. xxxv. 30. It is in favour of life that in capital causes two witnesses were required, as with us in case of treason. See Heb. vi. 18.

2. He applies this to the case in hand, *ver. 18. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me bears witness of me.* Behold two witnesses! Though in human courts, where two witnesses are required, the criminal, or candidate, is not admitted to be a witness for himself; yet in a matter purely divine, which can be proved only by a divine testimony, and God himself must be the witness, if the formality of two or three witnesses be insisted on, there can be no other than the eternal Father, the eternal Son of the Father, and the eternal Spirit. Now if the testimony of two distinct persons, that are men, and therefore may deceive, or be deceived, is conclusive, much more ought the testimony of the Son of God concerning himself, backed with the testimony of his Father concerning him to command assent; see 1 John v. 7, 9, 10, 11. Now this proves, not only that the Father and the Son are two distinct persons, for their respective testimonies are here spoken of as the testimonies of two several persons; but that these two are one, not only one in their testimony, but equal in power and glory, and therefore the same in substance. St. Austin here takes occasion to caution his hearers against Sabellianism on the one hand, which confounded the persons in the Godhead, and Arianism on the other, which denied the Godhead of the Son and Spirit. *Alius est filius, & alius pater, non tamen aliud, sed hoc ipsum est & pater, & filius, scil. unus Deus est*, Tract. 36. in Joann.

Christ here speaks of himself and the Father as witnesses to the world, giving in evidence to the reason and conscience of the children of men, whom he deals with as men. And these witnesses to the world now, will in the great day be witnesses against those that perish in unbelief, and their word will judge men.

This was the sum of the first conference between Christ and these carnal Jews; in the conclusion of which, we are told how their tongues were let loose, and their hands tied. 1. How their tongues were let loose (such was the malice of hell) to cavil at his discourse, *ver. 19. Though in what he said there appeared nothing of human policy or artifice, but a divine security, yet they set themselves to cross questions, with him. None so incurably blind, as those that resolve they will not see.*

Observe, (1.) How they evaded the conviction with a cavil; *Then said they unto him, where is thy Father?* They might easily have understood by the tenor of this, and other his discourses, that



that when he spoke of his *Father*, he meant no other but God himself, yet they pretend to understand him of a common person; and since he had appealed to his testimony, they bid him *call his witness*, and challenge him, if he could, to produce him; *where is thy Father?* Thus, as Christ said of them, *ver. 15. they judge after the flesh*. Perhaps they hereby intend a reflexion upon the meanness and obscurity of his family; *where is thy father*, that he should be fit to give evidence in such a case as this. Thus they turn it off with a taunt, when they *could not resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spake*.

(2.) How he evaded the *cavil* with a further *conviction*; he did not tell them where his Father was, but charged them with wilful ignorance; *ye neither know me, nor my Father*. It is to no purpose to discourse to you about divine things, who talk of them as blind men do of colours. Poor creatures! ye know nothing of the matter.

1. He chargeth them with ignorance of God, *ye know not my Father*. In Judah was God known, *Psal. lxxvi. 1. they had some knowledge of him as the God that made the world*, but their eyes were darkened that they could not see the light of his glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ. The little children of the Christian church *know the Father*, know him as a Father, *1 John ii. 13.* but these rulers of the Jews did not, because they would not so know him.

2. He shews them the true cause of their ignorance of God, *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also*. The reason why men are ignorant of God, is because they are unacquainted with Jesus Christ. Did we know Christ, 1. In knowing him we should know the Father, whose person he is the express image of, *John xiv. 9.* Chrysostom proves hence the Godhead of Christ, and his equality with his Father. We cannot say, he that knows a man knows an angel, or he that knows a creature knows the Creator, but he that knows Christ, knows the Father. 2. By him we shall be instructed in the knowledge of God, and introduced into an acquaintance with him. If we *knew Christ* better, we should *know the Father* better, but where the Christian religion is slighted and opposed, natural religion will soon be lost and laid aside: Deism makes way for atheism. Those become vain in their imaginations concerning God, that will not learn of Christ.

2. See how their *hands* were tied, though their *tongues* were thus *let loose*; such was the power of heaven to restrain the malice of hell. *These words spake Jesus*, these bold words, these words of conviction and reproof, *in the treasury*, an apartment of the temple, where to be sure the chief priests, whose gain was their godliness, were mostly resident, attending the business of the revenue. Christ *taught in the temple*, sometimes in one part, sometimes in another, as he saw occasion. Now the priests who had so great a *stroke* in the temple, and looked upon it as their *demesn*, might easily, with the assistance of their janizaries that were at their beck, either have *seized* him, and *exposed* him to the rage of the mob, and that punishment which they called the *beating of the rebels*; or at least have *silenced* him, and stopped his mouth there, as Amos, though tolerated in the land of Judah, was forbidden to prophesy in the king's chapel, *Amos vii. 12, 13.* Yet even *in the temple*, where they had him in their reach, *No man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come*. See here (1.) The restraint laid upon his persecutors by an invisible power, none of them durst meddle with him. God can set bounds to the wrath of men, as he doth to the waves of the sea; let us not therefore fear danger in the way of duty. For God hath Satan and all his instruments in a chain. (2.) The reason of this restraint, *His hour was not yet come*. The frequent mention of this intimates, how much the time of our departure out of the world depends upon the fixed counsel and decree of God. It *will* come, it is coming; not yet come, but it is at hand; Our enemies cannot hasten it any sooner, nor our friends delay it any longer than the time appointed of the Father, which is very comfortable to every good man, who can look up, and say with pleasure, *My times are in thy hands*; and better there than in our own. His hour was not yet come, because his work was not done, nor his testimony finished. To all God's purposes *there is a time*.

21. Then said Jesus again unto them, *I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come*. 22. Then said the Jews, *Will he kill himself?* because he saith, *Whither I go, ye cannot come*. 23. And he said unto them, *Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world*. 24. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins. 25. Then said they unto him, *Who art thou?* And Jesus saith unto them, *Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning*. 26. I have many things to say, and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. 27. They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28. Then said Jesus unto them, *When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things*. 29. And he that sent me, is with me: the Father hath not let me alone: for I do always those things that please him. 30. As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Christ here gives fair warning to the careless unbelieving Jews, to consider what would be the consequence of their infidelity, that they might prevent it before it was too late; for he spake words of terror as well as words of grace. Observe here,

First, *The wrath threatened*, *ver. 21. Jesus said again unto them that which might be likely to do them good*. He continued to teach in kindness to those few who received his doctrine, though there were many that resisted it, which is an example to ministers to go on with their work, notwithstanding opposition, because a remnant shall be saved. Here Christ changes his voice; he had *pip'd to them* in the offers of his grace, and they *had not danced*; now he mourns to them in the denunciations of his wrath, to try if they would lament. He said, *I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: Whither I go ye cannot come*. Every word is terrible, and speaks spiritual judgments, which are the forest of all others; worse than war, pestilence and captivity, which the Old Testament prophets denounced.

Four things are here threatened against the Jews.

1. Christ's departure from them. *I go my way*, i. e. it shall not be long but I will go, you need not take so much pains to drive me from you, I shall go of myself. They said to him, *depart from us*, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways, and he takes them at their word; but wo to those from whom Christ departs. Ichabod, the glory is gone, our defence is departed when Christ goes. Christ frequently warned them of his departure before he left them; he *bid oft farewell*, as one *loth to depart*, and willing to be invited, and that would have them *stir up themselves to take hold on him*.

2. Their enmity to the true Messiah, and their fruitless and insatuated enquiries after another Messiah, when he was gone away, which were both their sins and their punishments. *Ye shall seek me*, which speaks, either, (1.) Their enmity to the true Christ. Ye shall seek to ruin my interest, by persecuting my doctrine and followers with a fruitless design to root them out. This was a continual vexation and torment to themselves, made them incurably *ill-natured*, and brought *wrath upon them* (God's and our own) *to the uttermost*. Or, (2.) Their enquiries after *false christs*. Ye shall continue your expectations of the Messiah, and be the self-perplexing seekers of a Christ to come when he is already come; like the Sodomites, who being struck with blindness, wearied themselves to find the door, *Rom. ix. 31, 32.*

3. Their final impenitency: *Ye shall die in your sins*. Here is an error in all our English bibles, even the old bishops translation, and that of Geneva, (the Rhemists only excepted) for all the Greek copies have it in the singular number, *ἐν τῇ ἀμαρτία ὑμῶν*, *In your sin*, so all the Latin versions; and Calvin has a note upon the difference between this and *ver. 24.* where it is plural, *ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις*, that here it is meant especially of the sin of unbelief, *in hoc peccato vestro*, in this sin of yours. Note, Those that live in unbelief are for ever undone, if they die in unbelief. Or, it may be understood in general, *Ye shall die in your iniquity*, as *Ezek. iii. 19.* and *xxxiii. 9.* Many that have long lived in sin, yet by a timely repentance, through grace are saved from *dying in sin*; but those who go out of this world of probation into that of retribution under the guilt of sin *unpardoned*, and the power of sin *unbroken*, there remaineth no relief; salvation itself cannot save them, *Job xx. 11. Ezek. xxxii. 27.*

4. Their eternal separation from Christ, and all happiness in him: *Whither I go ye cannot come*. When Christ left the world he went to a state of perfect happiness; he went to paradise, thither he took the penitent thief with him that did not die in his sins; but the impenitent not only *shall not* come to him, but they *cannot*; it is morally impossible, for heaven would not be heaven to those that die un sanctified, and *unmeet* for it. Ye cannot come, because ye have *no right* to enter into that Jerusalem, *Rev. xxii. 14. Whither I go ye cannot come* to fetch me thence, so Dr. Whitby; and the same is the comfort of all good Christians, that when they are got to heaven, they will be out of the reach of their enemies malice.

Secondly, *The jest they made of this threatening*. Instead of trembling at this word, they bantered it, and turned it into ridicule; *ver. 22. Will he kill himself?* See here, 1. What slight thoughts they had of Christ's threatenings, they could make themselves and one another merry with them, as those that mocked the messengers of the Lord, and turned the *burthen of the word of the Lord* into a *by-word*, and *precept upon precept, line upon line* into a merry song, *Isa. xxviii. 13.* But *be ye not mockers lest your bands be made strong*. 2. What ill thoughts they had of Christ's meaning, as if he had an inhuman design upon his own life to avoid the indignities done him, like Saul. This is indeed (say they) to go whither we cannot follow him, for we will never *kill our selves*. Thus they make him not only such a one



as themselves, but worse; yet in the calamities brought by the Romans upon the Jews, many of them in discontent and despair did *kill themselves*. They had put a much more favourable construction upon this word of his, chap. vii. 34, 35. *Will he go to the dispersed Gentiles?* But see how indulged malice grows more and more malicious.

Thirdly, The confirmation of what he had said.

1. He had said, *whither I go ye cannot come*, and here he gives reason for that, ver. 23. *Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world.* Ye are ἐκ τῶν κάτω, of those things which are beneath; nothing, not so much their rise from beneath, as their affection to these lower things; ye are in *with these things*, as those that belong to them, how can you come where I go, when your spirit and disposition is so directly contrary to mine? See here, (1.) What the *spirit of the Lord Jesus* was, not of *this world*, but from *above*. He was perfectly dead to the wealth of the world, the ease of the body, and the praise of men, and was wholly taken up with divine and heavenly things, and none shall be with him but those who are *born from above*, and have their *conversation in heaven*. (2.) How contrary to this *their spirit* was; ye are *from beneath*, and of *this world*. The Pharisees were of a carnal, worldly spirit, and what communion could Christ have with them.

2. He had said, *ye shall die in your sin*, and here he stands to it; therefore I said ye shall die in your sins, because ye are *from beneath*; and he gives this further reason for it, *if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*, ver. 24. See here, 1. What we are required to believe, that *I am he*, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι, *That I am*, which is one of God's names, Exod. iii. 14. It was the Son of God that there said, Ehejeh asher Ehejeh, *I will be what I will be*; for the deliverance of Israel was but a figure of good things to come, but now he saith, *I am he*; he that should come, he that you expect the Messiah to be, that you would have me to be to you: I am more than the bare name of the Messiah; I do not only call my self so, but *I am he*. True faith doth not amuse the soul with an empty sound of words, but affects it with the doctrine of Christ's mediation as a real thing, that has real effects. 2. How necessary it is that we believe this, if we have not this faith, *we shall die in our sins*; for the matter is so settled, that without this faith, 1. We cannot be saved from the power of sin while we live, and therefore shall certainly continue in them to the last. Nothing but the *doctrine of Christ's grace* will be an argument powerful enough, and none but the *Spirit of Christ's grace* will be an agent powerful enough to turn us from sin to God; and that Spirit is given, and that doctrine given to be effectual to those only who believe in Christ: So that if Satan be not by faith dispossessed, he has a lease of the soul for its life; if Christ do not cure us, our case is desperate, and we shall *die in our sins*. 2. Without faith we cannot be saved from the punishment of sin when we die, for the *wrath of God remains* upon them that believe not, Mark xvi. 16. Unbelief is the damning sin, it is a sin against the remedy. Now this implies the great gospel promise, *if we believe that Christ is he*, and receive him accordingly, *we shall not die in our sins*. The law saith absolutely to all, as Christ said, ver. 21. *Ye shall die in your sin*, for we are all guilty before God; but the gospel is a defeasance of the obligation upon condition of believing; the curse of the law is vacated and annulled to all that submit to the grace of the gospel; believers die in Christ, in his love, in his arms, and so are saved from dying in their sins.

Fourthly, Here is a further discourse concerning *himself*, occasioned by his requiring faith in himself as the condition of salvation, ver. 25—29. Observe,

1. The question which the Jews put to him, ver. 25. *Who art thou?* This they asked tauntingly, and not with any desire to be instructed. He had said, ye must believe that *I am he*. By his not saying expressly who he was, he plainly intimated, that in *his person* he was such a one as could not be described by any, and in *his office* such a one as was expected by all that looked for redemption in Israel; yet this awful manner of speaking, which had so much significancy in it, they turned to his reproach, as if he knew not what to say of himself. *Who art thou?* That we must with an implicit faith believe in thee, that thou art some mighty HE; we know not *who*, or *what*, nor are *worthy to know*.

2. His answer to this question, wherein he directs them three ways for information.

1. He refers himself to *what he had said* all along. Do you ask who I am, *even the same that I said unto you from the beginning*. The original here is a little intricate, τὴν ἀρχὴν ὃ τὶ καὶ λαλῶ ὑμῖν, which some read thus; *I am the beginning, which also I speak unto you*. So Austin takes it, Christ is called ἀρχή, the beginning, Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 8.—xxi. 6.—iii. 14. and so it agrees with, ver. 24. *I am he*, compare Isa. xli. 4. *I am the first, I am he*. Those who object that it is the accusative case, and therefore not properly answering to τίς εἶ; must undertake to construe by grammar rules that parallel expression, Rev. i. 8. ὁ ἄρχων. But most interpreters agree with our version, do you ask *who I am?*

(1.) I am the same that I said to you from the beginning of time in the scriptures of the Old Testament, the same that from

the beginning was said to be *the seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head*. The same that in all the ages of the church was the mediator of the covenant, and the faith of the patriarchs.

(2.) From the beginning of my publick ministry. The account he had already given of himself, he resolved to *abide by*; he had declared himself to be the *Son of God*, chap. v. 16. to be the *Christ*, chap. iv. 26. and the bread of life, and had proposed himself as the object of that faith which is necessary to salvation, and to this he refers himself for an answer to their question, Christ is *one with himself*, what he had said from the beginning, he saith still. His is an *everlasting gospel*.

2. He refers himself to his Father's judgment, and the instructions he had from him, ver. 26. *I have many things*, more than you think of, *to say*, and in them to *judge of you*. But (why should I trouble my self any further with you?) I know very well, *he that sent me is true*, and will stand by me, and bear me out, for *I speak to the world*, to which I am sent as an ambassador, *those things*, all those, and those only, *which I have heard of him*. Here,

(1.) He suppresseth his accusations of them. He had *many things* to charge them with, and many evidences to produce against them, but for the present he had said enough. Note, Whatever discoveries of sin are made to us, he that searcheth the heart hath still *more to judge of us*, 1 John iii. 20. How much soever God reckons with sinners in this world, there is still a *further reckoning* yet behind, Deut. xxxii. 34. Let us learn hence not to be forward to say all we can say, even against the worst of men; we may have many things to say by way of censure, which yet it is better to leave *unsaid*, for what is it to us?

(2.) He enters his appeal against them to his Father; *He that sent me*. Here two things comfort him.

(1.) That he had been *true to his Father*, and to the trust reposed in him; *I speak to the world*, for his gospel was to be preached to every creature, *those things which I have heard of him*. Being given for a *witness to the people*, Isa. lv. 4. He was *amen*, a *faithful witness*, Rev. iii. 14. He did not *conceal* his doctrine, but spoke it *to the world*; being of common concern, it was to be of common notice; nor did he change or alter it, nor vary from the instructions he received from him that sent him.

(2.) That his Father would be *true to him*; true to the promise, that he would *make his mouth like a sharp sword*; true to his purpose concerning him, which was a *decree*, Psal. ii. 7. true to the threatnings of his wrath against those that should reject him. Though he should not *accuse them* to his Father, yet the Father that sent him, would undoubtedly reckon with them, and would be *true to what he had said*, Deut. xviii. 19. that whosoever would not hearken to that prophet whom God would raise up, *he would require it of him*. Christ would not accuse them, for faith he, he that sent me is true, and will *pass judgment* on them, though I should not demand judgment against them. Thus when he *lets fall* the present prosecution, he *binds them over* to the judgment-day, when it will be too late to *dispute*, what they will not now be persuaded to *believe*. *I as a deaf man heard not, for thou wilt hear*, Psal. xxxviii. 14, 15.

Upon this part of our Saviour's discourse, the evangelist has a melancholy remark, ver. 27. *They understood not that he spake to them of the Father*. See here, (1.) The power of Satan to blind the minds of them which believe not; though Christ spoke so plainly of God as his Father in heaven, yet they did not understand who he meant, but thought he spoke of some father he had in Galilee. Thus the plainest things are riddles and parables to those who are resolved to hold fast their prejudices; day and night are alike to the blind. (2.) The reason why the threatnings of the word make so little impression upon the minds of sinners, it is because they understand not whose the wrath is that is revealed in them: when Christ told them of the truth of him that sent him, as a warning to them to prepare for his judgment, which is *according to truth*; they slighted the warning, because they understood not whose judgment it was that they made themselves obnoxious to.

3. He refers himself to *their own convictions* hereafter, ver. 28, 29. He finds they will not understand him, and therefore adjourns the trial, till further evidence should come in; they that *will not see*, yet *shall see*, Isa. xxvi. 11. Now observe here,

1. *What they should ere long be convinced of; ye shall know that I am he*, that Jesus is the true Messiah. Whether you will own it or no before men, you shall be made to know it in your own consciences, the convictions of which though you may *sift*, yet you cannot *baffle*. That *I am he*, not which you represent me to be, but he that I preach my self to be, he that should come! Two things they should be convinced of, in order to this. (1.) That he did nothing of *himself*, not of himself as man, of himself alone, of himself without the Father, with whom he *was one*. He doth not hereby derogate from his own inherent power, but only denies their charge against him as a *false prophet*, of whom it is said, that they prophesied out of *their own hearts*, and followed *their own spirits*. (2.) That as *his Father taught him*, so he *spoke these things*, that he was not ἀποδιδάσκων, but ἐκδοδιδάσκων. The doctrine he preached was the counterpart of the counsels of God, which he was intimately acquainted



acquainted with, καθὼς ἐδίδαξε, ταύτα λαλῶ. I speak those things not only *which* he taught me, but *as* he taught me, with the same divine power and authority.

2. When they should be convinced of this. *When ye have lift up the Son of man*, lifted him up upon the cross, as the brazen serpent upon the pole, John iii. 14. as the sacrifices under the law (for Christ is the great sacrifice) which when they were offered, were said to be *elevated* or *lifted up*; hence the burnt-offerings, the most ancient and honourable of all, were called *elevations* (*Gnoloth* from *Gnolab*, *ascendit*) and in many other offerings they used the significant ceremony, of *heaving* the sacrifice up, and *moving* it before the Lord; thus was Christ *lifted up*. Or it notes, that his death was his exaltation; they that put him to death, thought thereby for ever to have *sunk* him and his interest, but it proved to be the advancement of both, John xii. 24. When the Son of Man was *crucified*, the Son of man was *glorified*. Christ had called his dying his *going away*, here his being *lifted up*; thus the death of the saints, as it is their departure out of this world, so it is their advancement to a better. Observe, He speaks of those he is now talking with, as the *instruments* of his death; when *ye have lift up the Son of man*, not that they were to be the *priests* to offer him up, no, that was his own act, he *offered up himself*, but they would be his betrayers and murderers; see Acts ii. 23. they *lifted him up* to the cross, but then he lifted up himself to his Father. Observe, with what tenderness and mildness Christ here speaks to those, who he certainly knew would put him to death, to teach us not to *hate* or *seek the hurt* of any, though we may have reason to think they *hate us*, and *seek our hurt*.

Now Christ speaks of his death, as that which would be a powerful conviction of the infidelity of the Jews; *when ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know this*. And why then? (1.) Because careless and unthinking people are often taught the *worth* of mercies by the *want* of them, Luke xvii. 22. (2.) The guilt of their sin in putting Christ to death, would so awaken their consciences, that they would be put upon serious enquiries after a Saviour, and then would know that Jesus was he, who alone could save them. And so it proved, when being told, that with wicked hands they had *crucified and slain* the Son of God, they cried out, *What shall we do?* and were made to know assuredly, that this Jesus was *Lord and Christ*, Acts ii. 37. (3.) There would be such signs and wonders attending his death, and the *lifting up* of him up from death in his resurrection, as would give a stronger proof of his being the Messiah, than any that had been yet given: and multitudes were hereby brought to believe that Jesus is the Christ, who had before contradicted and opposed him. (4.) By the death of Christ, the pouring out of the Spirit was purchased, who would convince the world that *Jesus is he*, John xvi. 7, 8. (5.) The judgments which the Jews brought upon themselves, by putting Christ to death, which filled up the measure of their iniquity, were a sensible conviction to the most hardened among them, that *Jesus was he*; Christ had often foretold that desolation, as the just punishment of their invincible unbelief, and *when it came to pass*, (*lo, it did come*) they could not but know that the *great prophet had been among them*, Ezek. xxxiii. 33.

3. What supported our Lord Jesus in the mean time, ver. 29. *He that sent me is with me*, in my whole undertaking, *for the Father* (the fountain and first spring of this affair, from whom, as its great cause and author it is derived) *hath not left me alone* to manage it my self, nor deserted the business, or me, in the prosecution of it, for *I do always those things that please him*.

Here is, 1. The assurance which Christ had of his Father's presence with him, which includes both a divine power going along with him to enable him for his work, and a divine favour manifested to him to encourage him in it. *He that sent me is with me*, Isa. xlii. 1. *Psal. lxxxix. 21*. This greatly emboldens our faith in Christ, and our reliance upon his word, that he had, and knew he had his Father with him, to confirm the word of his servant, Isa. xliv. 26. The King of kings accompanied his own ambassador, to attest his mission, and assist his management, and never left him alone, either solitary or weak; it also aggravated the wickedness of those that opposed him, and was an intimation to them of the *premunire* they run themselves into, by resisting him, for thereby they were found *fighters against God*. How easily soever they might think to crush him and run him down, let them know he had one to back him, with whom it is the greatest madness that can be to contend.

2. The ground of this assurance; *for I do always those things that please him*. That is, (1.) That great affair which our Lord Jesus was continually engaged in, was an affair which the Father *that sent him* was highly well pleased with. His whole undertaking is called the *pleasure of the Lord*, Isa. liii. 10. because of the counsels of the eternal mind about it, and the complacency of the eternal mind in it. (2.) His management of that affair was in nothing displeasing to his Father; in executing his commission, he punctually observed all his instructions, and did in nothing vary from them; no mere man since the fall could say such a word as this, *for in many things we offend all*, but our Lord Jesus never offended his Father in any thing, but as became him, he fulfilled all righteousness; and this was necessary to the validity and value of

the sacrifice he was to offer up; for if he had in any thing *displeased* the Father himself, and so had had any sin of his own to answer for, the Father could not have been pleased with him, as a propitiation for our sins, but such a priest, and such a sacrifice became us, as was perfectly pure and spotless. We may likewise learn hence, that God's servants may then expect God's presence with them, when they *chuse* and *do those things that please him*, Isa. lvi. 45.

Fifthly, Here is the good effect which this discourse of Christ's had upon some of his hearers, ver. 30. *As he spake these words, many believed on him*. Note, 1. Though multitudes perish in their unbelief, yet there is a remnant according to the election of grace, who believe to the saving of the soul. If Israel, the whole body of the people be not gathered, yet there are those of them, in whom Christ will be glorious, Isa. xlix. 5. This the apostle insists upon to reconcile the Jews rejection, with the promises made unto their fathers. There is a remnant, Rom. xi. 5. 2. The words of Christ, and particularly his threatening words are made effectual by the grace of God, to bring in poor souls to believe in him. When Christ told them, that if they believed not, they should die in their sins, and never get to heaven, they thought it was time to look about them, Rom. i. 16. 18. 3. Sometimes there is a wide door opened, and an effectual one, even there where there are many adversaries. Christ will carry on his work, though the heathen rage. The gospel gains great victories, sometimes there where it meets with great opposition. Let this encourage God's ministers to preach the gospel, though it be with much contention, for they shall not labour in vain. Many may be secretly brought home to God by those endeavours, which are openly contradicted and cavilled at by men of corrupt minds. Austin has an affectionate ejaculation in his lecture upon these words, *Utinam ut me loquenti multi credant, non in me, sed mecum in eo!*

31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. 33. ¶ They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 34. Jesus answered them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. 35. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 37. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

We have in these verses,

First, A comfortable doctrine laid down concerning the spiritual liberty of Christ's disciples, intended for the encouragement of those Jews which believed. Christ knowing that his doctrine began to work upon some of his hearers, and perceiving that virtue had gone out of him, turned his discourse from the proud Pharisees, and addressed himself to those weak believers; then when he had denounced wrath against those that were hardened in unbelief, then he spoke comfort to those few feeble Jews which believed in him. See here, 1. How graciously the Lord Jesus looks to those that tremble at his word, and are ready to receive it; he hath something to say to those who have hearing ears, and will not pass by those who set themselves in his way, without speaking to them. 2. How carefully he cherisheth the beginnings of grace, and meets those that are coming towards him. These Jews that believed, were yet but weak; but Christ did not therefore cast them off, for he gathers the lambs in his arms. When faith is in its infancy, he hath knees to prevent it, breasts for it to suck, that it may not die from the womb.

In what he said to them, we have two things, which he saith to all that should at any time believe.

1. The character of a true disciple of Christ, *if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed*. When they believed on him as the great prophet, they gave up themselves to be his disciples. Now at their entrance into his school, he lays down this for a settled rule, that he would own none for his disciples, but those that continued in his word. 1. It is implied that there are many who profess themselves Christ's disciples, that are not his disciples indeed; but only in shew and name. 2. It highly concerns those that are not strong in faith, yet to see to it that they be found in the faith; that though they be not disciples of the highest form, yet that they be disciples indeed. 3. Those that seem willing to be Christ's disciples, ought to be told that they had as good never come to him, unless they come with a resolution, by his grace to abide by him. Let those that have thoughts of covenanting with Christ, have no thoughts of reserving a power of revocation. Children are set to school and bound apprentices only for a few years; but those only are Christ's, that are willing to be bound to him for term of life. 4. They only that continue in Christ's word,



word, shall be accepted as his *disciples indeed*, that *adhered* to his word in every instance without partiality, and *abide* by it to the end without apostasy. It is *μενεῖν* to dwell in Christ's word, as a man doth at home, which is his centre, and rest, and refuge. Our converse with the word and conformity to it must be constant. If we continue disciples to the last, then, and not otherwise we approve our selves *disciples indeed*.

2. The privilege of a true disciple of Christ. Here are two precious promises made to those who thus approve themselves disciples indeed, *ver.* 32.

(1.) *Ye shall know the truth*, shall know all that truth, which it is needful and profitable for you to know, and shall be more confirmed in the belief of it, shall know the certainty of it. Note, 1. Even those who are true believers and disciples indeed, yet may be, and are much in the dark, concerning many things which they should know. God's children are but children, and understand and speak as children. Did we not need to be taught, we should not need to be disciples. 2. It is a very great privilege to *know the truth*; to know the particular truths which we are to believe in their mutual dependences and connexions, and the grounds and reasons of our belief; to know what is truth, and what proves it to be so. 3. It is a gracious promise of Christ to all who continue in his word, that they shall know the truth as far as is needful and profitable for them. Christ's scholars are sure to be well taught.

2. *The truth shall make you free*. That is, (1.) The truth which Christ teacheth, tends to make men free, *Isa.* lxi. 1. Justification makes us free from the guilt of sin, by which we were bound over to the judgment of God, and bound under amazing fears; sanctification makes us free from the bondage of corruption, by which we are restrained from that service which is perfect freedom, and constrained to that which is perfect slavery. Gospel truth frees us from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and the more grievous burthens of the traditions of the elders. It makes us free from our spiritual enemies, free in the service of God, free to the privileges of sons, and free of the Jerusalem which is from above, which is free. (2.) The knowing, entertaining and believing of this truth doth actually make us free, free from prejudices, mistakes and false notions, than which nothing doth more enslave and entangle the soul; free from the dominion of lust and passion, and restores the soul to the government of it self, by reducing it into obedience to its Creator. The mind by admitting the truth of Christ in the light and power is vastly enlarged, and hath scope and compass given it, is greatly elevated and raised above things of sense, and never acts with so true a liberty, as when it acts under a divine command, *2 Cor.* iii. 17. The enemies of Christianity pretend to *free-thinking*, whereas really those are the freest reasonings, that are guided by faith, and those are men of *free thought*, whose thoughts are captivated and brought into obedience to Christ.

Secondly, The offence which the carnal Jews took at this doctrine, and their objection against it. Though it was a doctrine that brought glad tidings of liberty to the captives, yet they cavilled at it, *ver.* 33. The Pharisees who grudged this comfortable word to them that believed, the standers by, who had *no part or lot in this matter*, they thought themselves reflected upon and affronted by the gracious charter of liberty, granted to them that believed, and therefore with a great deal of pride and envy they answered him, *We Jews be Abraham's seed*, and therefore are *free-born*, and have not lost our birth-right freedom, *we were never in bondage to any man, how sayest thou then, to us Jews, ye shall be made free?*

See here what it was that they were grieved at, it was an *innuendo* in those words, *Ye shall be made free*; as if the Jewish church and nation were in some sort of bondage, which reflected on the Jews in general. And as if all that did not believe in Christ continued in that bondage, which reflected on the Pharisees in particular. Note, The privileges of the faithful, are the envy and vexation of unbelievers, *Psal.* cxii. 10.

2. See what it was that they alledged against it; whereas Christ intimated that they needed to be made free, they urge. 1. We be Abraham's seed, and Abraham was a *prince, and a great man*; though we live in Canaan, we are not descended from Canaan, nor under his doom, a *servant of servants shall he be*; we hold in *frank-almoign*, and not in *villenage*. It is common for a sinking, decaying family to boast of the glory and dignity of its ancestors, and to borrow honour from that name to which they repay disgrace; so the Jews here did. But this was not all; Abraham was in covenant with God and his children by his right, *Rom.* xi. 28. Now that covenant no doubt was a free charter, and invested them in privileges not consistent with a state of slavery, *Rom.* ix. 4. And therefore they think they had no occasion with so great a sum, as they reckoned faith in Christ to be, to obtain this freedom, when they were thus free-born. Note, It is the common fault and folly of those that have pious parentage and education to trust to it, and boast of it, as if it would atone for the want of real holiness. They were Abraham's seed, but what would that avail them, when we find one in hell, that could call Abraham father? Saving benefits are not like common privileges conveyed by entail to us and our issue, nor can a title to heaven be made by descent, neither may we claim as *heirs at law*, by making out our pedigree,

our title is purely by purchase, not our own, but our Redeemer's for us, under certain proviso's and limitations, which if we do not observe, it will not avail to us to be Abraham's seed. Thus many when they are pressed with the necessity of regeneration, turn it off with this, we are the *church's children*; but they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. 2. *We were never in bondage to any man*. Now observe, 1. How false this allegation was. I wonder how they could have the confidence to say a thing in the face of a congregation, which was so notoriously untrue; was not the seed of Abraham in bondage to the Egyptians? Were they not oft in bondage to the neighbour nations in the time of the judges? Were they not seventy years captives in Babylon? Nay, were they not at this time tributaries to the Romans, and though not in a *personal*, yet in a *national* bondage to them, and groaning to be made free? and yet to confront Christ, they have the impudence to say, *We were never in bondage*. Thus they would expose Christ to the ill will both of the Jews, who were very jealous for the honour of their liberty; and of the Romans, who would not be thought to enslave the nations they conquered. 2. How foolish the application was. Christ had spoken of a liberty wherewith the truth would make them free, which must be meant of a *spiritual* liberty, for truth as it is the *enriching*, so it is the *enfranchising* of the mind, and the *enlarging* of that from the captivity of error and prejudice; and yet they plead against the offer of *spiritual* liberty, that they were never in *corporal* thralldom; as if because they were never in bondage to any man, they were never in bondage to any lust. Note, Carnal hearts are sensible of no other grievances but those that molest the body, and distress their secular affairs. Talk to them of encroachments upon their civil liberty and property; tell them of waste committed upon their lands, or damage done to their houses, and they understand you very well, and can give you a sensible answer, the thing toucheth them, and affects them; but discourse to them of the bondage of sin, a captivity to Satan, and a liberty by Christ; tell them of wrong done to their precious souls, and the hazard of their eternal welfare, and you bring certain strange things to their ears; they say of it, as they did, *Ezek.* xx. 49. *Doth he not speak parables?* This here was much like the blunder Nicodemus made about being born again.

Thirdly, Our Saviour's vindication of this doctrine from these objections, and the further explication of it, *ver.* 34—37. where he doth these four things.

1. He shews that notwithstanding their civil liberties, and their visible church-membership, yet it was possible they might be in a state of bondage, *ver.* 34. *Whoever commits sin*, though he be of Abraham's seed, and never in bondage to any man, yet he is the servant of sin. Observe, Christ doth not upbraid them with the falshood of their plea, or their present bondage, but further explains what he had said for their edification. Thus ministers should with meekness instruct those that oppose them, that they may recover themselves, not with passion provoke them to entangle themselves yet more. Now here,

(1.) The preface is very solemn, *Verily, verily I say unto you*, an awful asseveration, which our Saviour oft used to command a reverent attention, and a ready assent. The style of the prophets was, *Thus saith the Lord*, for they were faithful as servants; but Christ being a son, speaks in his own name, *I say unto you*, I the Amen, the faithful witness, he pawns his veracity upon it. I say it to you, who boast of your relation to Abraham, as if that would save you.

(2.) The truth is of universal concern, though here delivered upon a particular occasion, *Whoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin*, and sadly wants to be made free. A state of sin is a state of bondage.

1. See who it is on whom this brand is fastened, on him that commits sin, *ὁ ἑκάστην ἁμαρτίαν*, every one that makes sin. There is not a just man upon earth, that lives, and sins not, yet every one that sins, is not a servant of sin, for then God would have no servants; but he that makes sin, that make choice of sin, prefers the way of wickedness before the way of holiness, *Jer.* xlv. 16, 17. that makes a covenant with sin, enters into league with it, and makes a marriage with it; that makes contrivances of sin, makes provision for the flesh, and deviseth iniquity; and that makes a custom of sin, who walks after the flesh, and makes a trade of sin.

2. See what the brand is, which Christ fastens upon them that thus commit sin; he stigmatizeth them, gives them a mark of servitude: They are *servants of sin*; imprisoned under the guilt of sin, under an arrest, in hold for it, concluded under sin, and they are subject to the power of sin. He is a *servant of sin*, i. e. he makes himself so, and is so accounted; he hath sold himself to work wickedness; his lusts give law to him, he is at their beck, and is not his own master. He doth the work of sin, supports its interest, and accepts its wages, *Rom.* vi. 16.

2. He shews them, that being in a state of bondage, their having a room in the house of God would not entitle them to the inheritance of sons, for *ver.* 35. *The servant*, though he be in the house for a while, yet being but a servant abideth not in the house for ever; services (we say) are no inheritances, they are but temporary, and not for a perpetuity; but the son of the family abideth ever. Now, 1. This points primarily at the rejection of the



the Jewish church and nation; Israel had been *God's Son, his first-born*, but they wretchedly degenerated into a *servile* disposition, were enslaved to the world and the flesh, and therefore though, by virtue of their birth-right, they thought themselves secure of their church membership, Christ tells them, that having thus made themselves servants, they should not *abide in the house for ever*. Jerusalem, by opposing the gospel of Christ, which proclaimed liberty, and adhering to the Sinai covenant, which rendered to bondage, after its term was *expired*, came to be *in bondage with her children*, Gal. iv. 24, 25. and therefore was unchurched and disfranchized, her charter seized, and taken away, and she was cast out as the son of the bond-woman, Gen. xxi. 20. Chrysostom gives this sense of this place, Think not to be made free from sin by the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, for Moses was but a servant, and had not that perpetual authority in the church, which the Son had, but if the Son make you free, it is well, ver. 36. But, 2. It looks further to the rejection of all that are the *servants of sin*, and receive not the *adoption of the sons of God*; though those unprofitable servants may be in God's house a while, as retainers to his family, yet there is a day coming, when the children of the *bond-woman* and of the *free* shall be distinguished. True believers only, who are the children of the promise, and of the covenant are accounted free, and shall abide for ever in the house, as Isaac: They shall have a *nail* in the holy place on earth, Jer. ix. 8. and *mansions* in the holy place in heaven, John xiv. 12.

3. He shews them the way of deliverance out of this state of bondage, into the glorious liberty of the children of God, Rom. viii. 21. The case of those that are the servants of sin is sad, but thanks be to God it is not *helpless*, it is not *hopeless*. As it is the privilege of all the sons of the family, and their dignity above the servants, that they abide in the house for ever; so he, who is *the son*, the first-born among many brethren, the heir of all things, he has a power both of manumission and of adoption; ver. 36. *If the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*

Note, 1. Jesus Christ in the gospel offers us *our freedom*; he has authority and power to *make free*. (1.) To *discharge prisoners*; this he doth in *justification*, by making satisfaction for *our guilt*, on which the gospel offer is grounded, which is to all, a conditional *act of indemnity*, and to all true believers upon their believing an absolute *charter of pardon*; and for *our debts*, for which we were by the law arrested and in execution; Christ as our surety, or rather our *bail* (for he was not originally bound with us, but upon our insolvency, bound for us) compounds with the creditor, answers the demands of injured justice, with more than an *equivalent*, takes the *bond* and *judgment* into his own hands, and gives them up *cancelled* to all that by faith and repentance give him (if I may so say) a *counter security* to save his honour harmless, and so they are *made free*; and from the debt, and every part thereof they are for ever acquitted, exonerated, and discharged, and a general release sealed of all actions and claims; whilst against those who refuse to come up to these terms, the securities lie still in the Redeemer's hands in full force. (2.) He has a power to rescue *bond-slaves*, and this he doth in *sanctification*; by the powerful arguments of his gospel, and the powerful operations of his Spirit, he breaks the power of corruption in the soul, rallies the scattered forces of reason and virtue, and fortifies God's interest against sin and Satan, and so the soul is made free. (3.) He has a power to *naturalize strangers and foreigners*, and this he doth in *adoption*. This is a further act of grace, we are not only forgiven and healed, but *preferred*, there is a charter of privileges as well as pardon, and thus the Son makes us free *denizens* of the kingdom of priests, the holy nation, the new Jerusalem.

2. Those whom Christ makes free, are *free indeed*. It is not ἀληθῶς, the word used, ver. 31. for disciples *indeed*, but ὁλῶς, *really*. It notes, 1. The truth and certainty of the promise, the liberty which the Jews boasted of was an *imaginary* liberty, they boasted of a *false gift*; but the liberty which Christ gives is a certain thing, it is real, and has real effects; the servants of sin promise themselves liberty, and fancy themselves free, when they have broke religion's bands asunder; but they cheat themselves, none are *free indeed*, but those whom Christ *makes free*. 2. It notes the singular excellency of the freedom promised; it is a freedom deserves the name, in comparison with which all other liberties are no better than slaveries, so much doth it turn to the honour and advantage of those that are *made free* by it. It is a *glorious* liberty. It is that which *is*; (so ὁλῶς signifies) it is *substance*, Prov. viii. 21. while the things of the world are shadows; things that *are not*.

4. He applies this to these unbelieving, cavilling Jews. In answer to their boasts of relation to Abraham, ver. 37. *I know very well, that ye are Abraham's seed, but now ye seek to kill me*, and therefore have forfeited the honour of your relation to Abraham, *because my word hath no place in you*. Observe here,

1. The dignity of their extraction allowed them, *I know that ye are Abraham's seed*, every one knows it, and it is your honour. He grants them what was true, and in what they said that was false, that they were *never* in bondage to any, he doth not *contradict* them, for he studied to *profit* them, and not to *provoke* them, and therefore said that which would please them, *I know that ye*

*are Abraham's seed*. They boasted of their descent from *Abraham*, as that which *aggrandized* their names, and made them exceeding honourable; whereas really it did but *aggravate* their crimes, and make them exceeding sinful. Out of their own mouths will he judge vain-glorious hypocrites, who boast of their parentage and education; are you *Abraham's seed*? why then did you not tread in the steps of his faith and obedience?

2. The disagreeableness of their practice with this dignity; *but ye seek to kill me*. They had attempted it several times, and were now designing it, which quickly appeared, ver. 59. when they *took up stones to cast at him*. Christ knows all the wickedness not only which men *do*, but which they *seek* and design, and endeavour to do. To seek to kill any innocent man, is a crime black enough, but to *compass* and *imagine* the death of him that was King of kings, was a crime which we want words to express the heinousness of.

3. The reason of this inconsistency; why were they that were Abraham's seed, so very inveterate against Abraham's promised seed, in whom they and *all the families of the earth* should be *blessed*; our Saviour here tells them, it is because *my word hath no place in you*, ἐχρῆσθαι ἐν ὑμῖν, *Non capit in vobis*, so the vulgar; *my word doth not take with you*, you have no inclination to it, no relish of it, other things are more taking, more pleasing. Or, it doth not *take hold of you*, it hath no power over you, makes no impression upon you. Some of the critics read it, *My word doth not penetrate into you*; it descended as the rain, but it came upon them as the rain upon the rock, which it runs off, and did not soak into their hearts, as the rain upon the plowed ground. The Syriac reads it, *Because ye do not acquiesce in my word*; you are not persuaded of the truth of it, nor pleased with the goodness of it. Our translation is very significant, it *has no place in you*. They *sought to kill him*, and so effectually to *silence* him, not because he had done them any harm, but because they could not bear the convincing, commanding power of his word. Note, 1. The words of Christ ought to have a place in us, the innermost and uppermost place; a *dwelling* place, as a man at home, and not as a stranger or sojourner, a *working* place, it must have room to operate, to work sin out of us, and to work grace in us; it must have a *ruling* place, its place must be *upon the throne*, it must dwell in us richly. 2. There are many that make a profession of religion, in whom *the word of Christ* has no place; they will not *allow* it a place, for they do not like it; Satan doth all he can to *displace* it; and other things possess the place it should have in us. 3. Where the word of God has no place, no good is to be expected, for room is left there for all wickedness. If the unclean spirit find the heart empty of Christ's word, he *enters in and dwells there*.

38. I speak that which I have seen with my Father; and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. 39. They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith, unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God. 42. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I of my self, but he sent me. 43. Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. 44. Ye are of *your father* the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47. He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

Here Christ and the Jews are still at it; he sets himself to convince and convert them, while they still set themselves to contradict and oppose him.

1. He here traceth the difference between his sentiments and theirs, to a different rise and original; ver. 38. *I speak that which I have seen with my Father*, and ye do what ye have seen with *your Father*. Here are two fathers spoken of according to the two families, into which the sons of men are divided; God and the devil, and without controversy these are contrary the one to the other.

(1.) Christ's *doctrine* was from *heaven*, it was copied out of the *counsels* of infinite wisdom, and the kind intentions of eternal love. (1.) *I speak that which I have seen*. The discoveries Christ has



has made us, of God and another world, are not grounded upon guesses and hear-say, but upon ocular inspection; so that he was thoroughly apprized of the nature, and ascertained of the truth of all he said. He that is given to be a witness to the people, is an eye-witness, and therefore unexceptionable. (2.) It is what I have seen with my Father. The doctrine of Christ is not a plausible hypothesis, supported by probable arguments, but it is an exact counterpart of the incontestable truths lodged in the eternal mind. It was not only what he had heard from his Father, but what he had seen with him, when the counsel of peace was between them both. Moses spake what he heard from God, but he might not see the face of God; Paul had been in the third heaven, but what he had seen there, he could not, he must not utter; for it was Christ's prerogative to have seen what he spoke, and to speak what he had seen.

(2.) Their doings were from hell; *Ye do that which ye have seen with your father.* Ye do, by your own works, father yourselves, for it is evident whom ye resemble, and therefore easy to find out your original. As a child that is trained up with his father, learns his father's words and fashions, and grows like him by an affected imitation, as well as by a natural image, so these Jews, by their malicious opposition to Christ and the gospel, made themselves as like the devil, as if they had industriously set him before them for their pattern.

2. He takes off and answers their vain-glorious boasts of relation to Abraham, and to God, as their fathers, and shews the vanity and falshood of their pretensions.

First, They pleaded relation to Abraham, and he replied to that plea, *They said, Abraham is our father,* ver. 39. In this they intended, (1.) To do honour to themselves, and to make themselves look great. They had forgot the mortification given them by that acknowledgment prescribed them, *Deut. xxvi. 5. A Syrian ready to perish was my father.* And the charge exhibited against their degenerate ancestors (whose steps they trod in, and not those of the first founder of the family) *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite,* Ezek. xvi. 3. As it is common for those families that are sinking and going to decay, to brag most of their pedigree, so it is common for those churches that are corrupt and depraved, to value themselves upon their antiquity, and the eminence of their first planters, *Puimus Troes, fuit Ilium.* (2.) They designed to cast an odium upon Christ, as if he reflected upon the patriarch Abraham, in speaking of their father, as one they had learned evil from. See how they sought an occasion to quarrel with him.

Now Christ overthrows this plea, and discovers the vanity of it, by a plain and cogent argument, Abraham's children will do the works of Abraham, but ye do not do Abraham's works, therefore ye are not Abraham's children.

1. The proposition is plain, *If ye were Abraham's children,* such children of Abraham as could claim an interest in the covenant made with him and his seed, which would indeed put an honour upon you, then ye would do the works of Abraham, for to those only of Abraham's house, who kept the way of the Lord, as Abraham did, would God perform what he had spoken, Gen. xviii. 19. Those only are reckoned the seed of Abraham, to whom the promise belongs, that tread in the steps of his faith and obedience, Rom. iv. 12. Though the Jews had their genealogies, and kept them exact, yet they could not by them make out their relation to Abraham, so as to take the benefit of the old entail, (*per formam doni*) unless they walked in the same spirit; good women's relation to Sarah is proved only by this, *whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well,* and no longer, 1 Pet. iii. 6. Note, Those who would approve themselves Abraham's seed, must not only be of Abraham's faith, but do Abraham's works, James ii. 21, 22. must come at God's call, as he did, must follow God wherever he leads them, must resign their dearest comforts to him, must be strangers and sojourners in this world, must keep up the worship of God in their families, and always walk before God in their uprightness, for these were the works of Abraham.

2. The assumption is evident likewise, *But ye do not do the works of Abraham, for ye seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard of God, this did not Abraham,* ver. 40.

(1.) He shews them what their work was; their present work, which they were now about; they sought to kill him; and three things are intimated as an aggravation of their intention. (1.) They were so unnatural as to seek the life of a man, a man like themselves, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, who had done them no harm, nor given them any provocation. *Ye imagine mischief against a man,* Psal. lxii. 3. (2.) They were so ungrateful as to seek the life of one that had told them the truth, had not only done them no injury, but done them the greatest kindness that could be; had not only not imposed upon them with a lye, but had instructed them in the most necessary and important truths; *was he therefore become their enemy?* (3.) They were so ungodly as to seek the life of one that told them the truth, which he had heard from God, who was a messenger sent from God to them, so that their attempt against him was quasi deicidium, an act of malice against God himself. This was their work, and they persisted in it.

No. xcv.

(2.) He shews them that this did not become the children of Abraham, for *this did not Abraham.* 1. He did nothing like this. He was famous for his humanity, witness his rescue of the captives; and for his piety, witness his obedience to the heavenly vision in many instances, and some tender ones. Abraham believed God, these were obstinate in unbelief; Abraham followed God, these fought against him; so that he would be ignorant of them, and would not acknowledge them, they were so unlike him, Isa. lxiii. 16. see Jer. xxii. 15, 16, 17. 2. He would not have done thus if he had lived now, or I had lived then. *Hoc Abraham non fecisset,* so some read it. We should thus reason ourselves out of any way of wickedness; would Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob have done so? We cannot expect to be ever with them, if we be never like them.

3. The conclusion follows of course, ver. 41. whatever your boasts and pretensions be, you are not Abraham's children, but father yourselves upon another family, ver. 41. there is a father whose deeds you do, whose spirit ye are of, and whom ye resemble. He doth not yet say plainly that he means the devil, till they, by their continued cavils, forced him so to explain himself; which teacheth us to treat even bad men with civility and respect, and not to be forward to say that of them, or to them, which, though true, sounds harsh. He tried whether they would suffer their own consciences to infer from what he said, that they were the devil's children, and it is better hear it from them now we are called to repent, that is, to change our father, and change our family by changing our spirit and way, than hear it from Christ in the great day.

Secondly, So far were they from owning their unworthiness of relation to Abraham, that they plead relation to God himself as their Father: *We be not born of fornication,* we are not bastards, but legitimate sons; *we have one Father, even God.*

1. Some understand this literally. They were not the sons of the bondwoman, as the Ishmaelites were; nor begotten in incest, as the Moabites and Ammonites were, Deut. xxiii. 3. nor were they a spurious brood in Abraham's family, but Hebrews of the Hebrews; and being born in lawful wedlock, they might call God Father, who instituted that honourable estate in innocency; for a legitimate seed, not tainted with divorces, or the plurality of wives, is called a seed of God, Mal. iii. 15.

2. Others take it figuratively. They begin to be aware now, that Christ spoke of a spiritual, not a carnal fatherhood; of the father of their religion, and so,

1. They deny themselves to be a generation of idolaters; *we be not born of fornication,* are not the children of idolatrous parents, nor have been bred up in idolatrous worships. Idolatry is often spoken of as spiritual whoredom, and idolaters as children of whoredoms, Hos. ii. 4. Jer. lvii. 3. Now if they mean that they were not the posterity of idolaters, the allegation was false, for no nation was more addicted to idolatry than the Jews before the captivity; if they mean no more, but that they themselves were not idolaters, what then? A man may be free from idolatry, and yet perish in another iniquity, and be shut out of Abraham's covenant. *If thou commit no idolatry* (apply it to this spiritual fornication) yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the covenant. A rebellious, prodigal son will be disinherited, though he be not born of fornication.

2. They boast themselves to be true worshippers of the true God. We have not many fathers, as the heathen had, *gods many, and lords many,* and yet were without God, as *filius populi* has many fathers, and yet none certain; no, *the Lord our God is one Lord, and one Father,* and therefore it is well with us. Note, Those flatter themselves, and put a damning cheat upon their own souls, who imagine that their professing the true religion, and worshipping the true God, will save them, though they worship not God in the spirit and in truth, nor are true to their profession.

Now our Saviour gives a full answer to this fallacious plea, ver. 42, 43. and proves, by two arguments, that they had no right to call God Father.

1. They did not love Christ: *If God were your Father, you would love me.* He had disproved their relation to Abraham, by their going about to kill him, ver. 40. but here he disproves their relation to God by their not loving and owning him; a man may pass for a child of Abraham, if he do not appear an enemy to Christ by gross sin; but he cannot approve himself a child of God, unless he be a faithful friend and follower of Christ. Note, All that have God for their Father, have a true love to Jesus Christ, an esteem of his person, a grateful sense of his love, a sincere affection to his cause and kingdom, a complacency in the salvation wrought out by him, and in the method and terms of it, and a care to keep his commandments, which is the surest evidence of our love to him. We are here in a state of probation, upon our trial, how we will carry ourselves to our Maker, and accordingly it will be with us in the state of retribution; God has taken various methods to prove us, and this was one; he sent his Son into the world, with sufficient proofs of his sonship and mission, concluding that all that called him Father, would kiss his Son, and bid him welcome, who was the first-born among many brethren; see 1 John v. 1. By this our adoption will be



proved or disproved, did we love Christ, or not? *If any man do not*, he is so far from being a child of God, that he is *anathema*, accursed, 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Now our Saviour proves, that if they were God's children, they would love him, for (saith he) I proceeded forth, and came from God. They will love him, for,

(1.) He was the *Son of God*; I proceeded forth from God. Ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ; this means his divine ἐξέλευσις, or original from the Father, by the communication of the divine essence, and also the union of the divine λογὸς, to his human nature, so Dr. Whitby. Now this could not but recommend him to the affections of all that were *born of God*. Christ is called the *beloved*, because being the beloved of the Father, he is certainly the beloved of all the saints. Eph. i. 6.

(2.) He was *sent of God*, came from him as an ambassador to the world of mankind. He did not *come of himself*, as the false prophets, who had not either their *mission*, or their *message* from God, Jer. xxiii. 21. Observe the emphasis he lays upon this, *I came from God*; neither came I of my self, but he sent me; he had both his credentials and his instructions from God; he came to *gather together in one the children of God*, John xi. 52. to bring *many sons to glory*, Heb. ii. 10. And would not all God's children embrace, with both arms, a messenger sent from their Father, on such errands? But these Jews made it appear they were nothing a-kin to God, by their want of affection to Jesus Christ.

2. They did not understand him. It was a sign they did not belong to God's family, that they did not understand the language and dialect of the family; *Ye do not understand my speech*, ver. 43. ὅτι λαλῶν ὅτι ἐμὴν. Christ's speech was divine and heavenly, but intelligible enough to those that were acquainted with the voice of Christ in the Old Testament; those that had made the word of the Creator familiar to them, need no other key to the dialect of the Redeemer; and yet these Jews make strange of the doctrine of Christ, and find knots in it, and I know not what stumbling stones. Could a Galilean be known by his speech? An Ephraimite by his *fibboleth*? And would any have the confidence to call God father, to whom the Son of God was a Barbarian, even when he spoke the will of God in the words of the Spirit of God. Note, Those who are not acquainted with the divine speech, have reason to fear that they are strangers to the divine nature. Christ spoke the words of God (John iii. 34.) in the dialect of the kingdom of God, and yet they who pretended to belong to the kingdom, understood not the idioms and proprieties of it, but, like strangers, and rude ones too, ridiculed it.

And the reason why they did not understand Christ's speech made the matter much worse, even *because ye cannot hear my word*, i. e. ye cannot persuade yourselves to hear it attentively, impartially, and without prejudice, as it should be heard. The meaning of this *cannot*, is an obstinate *will not*; as the Jews could not hear Stephen, Acts vii. 57. nor Paul, Acts xxii. 22. Note, The rooted antipathy of mens corrupt hearts to the doctrine of Christ, is the true reason of their ignorance of it, and their errors and mistakes about it. They do not like it, nor love it, and therefore they will not understand it; like Peter, who pretended he *knew not what the damsel said*, (Matt. xxvi. 70.) when in truth he knew not what to say to it. *Ye cannot hear my words*, for you have *stopped your ears*, Psal. lviii. 4, 5. and God, in a way of righteous judgment, has *made your ears heavy*, Isa. vi. 10.

3. Having thus disproved their relation, both to Abraham and to God, he comes next to tell them plainly whose children they were, *ye are of your father the devil*, ver. 44. If they be not God's children, they are the devil's, for God and Satan divide the world of mankind; the devil is therefore said to *work in the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. All wicked people are the devil's children, *children of Belial*, 2 Cor. vi. 15. the serpent's seed, Gen. iii. 15. children of the wicked one, Matt. xiii. 38. They partake of his nature, bear his image, obey his commands, and follow his example. Idolaters said to a *stock*, *thou art my father*, Jer. ii. 27.

This is a high charge, and sounds very harsh and horrid, that any of the children of men, especially the church's children, should be called children of the devil, and therefore our Saviour fully proves it.

1. By a general argument, *The lusts of your father you will do*, ἐλεγε ποιεῖν. 1. You do the devil's lusts, the lusts which he would have you to fulfil; you gratify and please him, and comply with his temptations, and are *led captives by him at his will*: Nay, you do those lusts which the devil himself fulfils. *Fleishly lusts*, and worldly lusts, the devil tempts men to, but being a spirit, he cannot fulfil them himself. The peculiar lusts of the devil are *spiritual wickednesses*, the lusts of the intellectual powers, and their corrupt reasonings; pride and envy, and wrath and malice; enmity to that which is good, and enticing others to that which is evil; these are lusts which the devil fulfils, and those who are under the dominion of these lusts resemble the devil, as the child doth the parent. The more there is of contemplation and contrivance, and secret complacency in sin, the more it resembles the *lusts of the devil*. 2. You will do the devil's lusts: The more there is of the *will* in these lusts, the more there is of

the devil in them. When sin is committed of *choice*, and not by surprise, with *pleasure*, and not with reluctance, when it is persisted in with a daring presumption, and a desperate resolution, like theirs that said, *We have loved strangers, and after them we will go*, then the sinner will do the devil's lusts. The lusts of your father you *delight to do*; so Dr. Hammond, they are rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel.

2. By two particular instances, wherein they manifestly resembled the devil, *murther* and *lying*. The devil is an enemy to life, because God is the God of life, and life is the happiness of man; and an enemy to truth, because God is the God of truth, and truth is the bond of human society.

1. He was a *murderer from the beginning*, not from his own beginning, for he was created an angel of light, and had a first estate, which was pure and good, but from the beginning of his apostasy, which was soon after the creation of man. He was ἀνθρωποκτόνος, homicida, a *man-slayer*; 1. He was a *hater of man*, and so in affection and disposition a murtherer of him. He has his name, *Satan*, from *Sitnah*, hatred. He maligned God's image upon man, envied his happiness, and earnestly desired his ruin, was an avowed enemy to the whole race. (2.) He was man's tempter to *that sin* which brought death into the world, and so he was effectually the murtherer of all mankind, which in Adam had but *one neck*. He was a murtherer of souls, *deceived* them into sin, and by it *slew them*, Rom. vii. 11. poisoned man with the forbidden fruit, and to aggravate the matter, made him his own murtherer. Thus he was not only *at the beginning*, but *from the beginning*, which intimates that thus he *has been* ever since; as he began, so he continues the murtherer of men by his temptations. The great tempter is the great destroyer. The Jews called the devil, *the angel of death*. 3. He was the first wheel in the first murther that ever was committed by Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, 1 John iii. 12. If the devil had not been very strong in Cain, he could not have done such an unnatural thing, as to kill his own brother. Cain killing his brother by the instigation of the devil, the devil is called the *murtherer*, which doth not speak Cain's personal guilt the less, but the devil's the more, whose torments we have reason to think will be the greater when the time comes, for all that wickedness which he has drawn men into. See what reason we have to *stand upon our guard, against the wiles of the devil*, and never to hearken to him, for he is a murtherer, and certainly aims to do us a mischief, even when he *speaks fair*; and to wonder that he who is the murtherer of the children of men, should yet be, by their own consent, so much their master.

Now herein these Jews were followers of him, and were murtherers like him; murtherers of souls, which they led blindfold into the ditch, and made the *children of hell*; sworn enemies to Christ, and now ready to be his betrayers and murtherers, for the same reason that Cain killed Abel. These Jews were that *seed of the serpent*, that were to *bruise the heel of the seed of the woman*; now ye seek to kill me.

2. He was a *liar*. A lye is opposed to truth, 1 John ii. 21. and accordingly the devil is here described to be,

1. An enemy to truth, and therefore to Christ.

(1.) He is a *deserter from the truth*; he *abode not in the truth*, did not continue in the purity and rectitude of his nature, wherein he was created, but left his first state; when he degenerated from goodness, he departed from truth, for his apostasy was founded in a lye. The angels were the *hosts of the Lord*, those that fell were not *true* to their commander and sovereign, they were not to be *trusted*, being charged with folly, and defection, Job iv. 18. By the truth here, we may understand the revealed will of God, concerning the salvation of man by Jesus Christ, the truth which Christ was now preaching, and which the Jews opposed; herein they did *like their father the devil*, who seeing the honour put upon the human nature, in the *first Adam*, and foreseeing the much greater honour intended it in the *second Adam*, would not be reconciled to that counsel of God, nor *stand in the truth* concerning it, but from a spirit of pride and envy, set himself to resist it, and to thwart the designs of it; and so did these Jews here, as his children and agents.

(2.) He is *destitute of the truth*; *there is no truth in him*. His interest in the world is supported by lyes and falsehoods, and there is no truth, nothing you can confide in, in him, nor in any thing he saith or doth. The notions he propagates concerning good and evil, are false and erroneous, his proofs are lying wonders, his temptations are all cheats; he has great knowledge of the truth, but having no affection to it, but, on the contrary, being a sworn enemy to it, he is said to have *no truth in him*.

2. He is a friend and patron of lying. *When he speaketh a lye, he speaketh of his own*. Three things are here said of the devil, with reference to the sin of lying.

1. That he is a *liar*; his oracles were lying oracles, his prophets lying prophets, and the images in which he was worshipped, *teachers of lyes*; he tempted our first parents with a downright lye; all his temptations are carried on by lyes, calling *evil good*, and *good evil*, and promising impunity in sin; he knows them to be lyes, and suggests them with an *intention to deceive*, and so to *destroy*. When he now *contradicted* the gospel in the *scribes*, and *Pharisees*, it was by lyes, and when afterwards he *corrupted*



it in the man of sin, it was by strong delusions, and a great complicated lye.

2. That when he *speaketh a lye*, he *speaketh of his own*, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων. It is the proper idiom of his language; of his own, not of God; his Creator never put it into him. When men speak a lye, they borrow it from the devil, Satan fills their hearts to lye, Acts v. 3. But when the devil speaks a lye, the model of it is of his own framing, the motives to it from himself, which speaks the desperate depth of wickedness, into which those apostate spirits are sunk; as in their first defection they had no tempter; so their sinfulness is still their own.

3. That he is the father of it, αὐτῆς. (1.) He is the father of every lye; not only of the lyes which he himself suggests, but of those which others speak; he is the author and founder of all lyes; when men speak lyes, they speak from him, and as his mouth, they come originally from him, and bear his image. (2.) He is the father of every liar; so it may be understood, God made men with a disposition to truth, it is congruous to reason and natural light, to the order of our faculties; and the laws of society, that we should speak truth; but the devil, the author of sin, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience, hath so corrupted the nature of man, that the wicked are said to be estranged from the womb, speaking lyes, Psal. lviii. 3. he hath taught them with their tongues to use deceit, Rom. iii. 13. He is the father of liars that begat them, that trained them up in the way of lying, whom they resemble and obey, and with whom all liars shall have their portion for ever. Christ having thus proved all murderers and all liars to be the devil's children, he leaves it to the consciences of his hearers to say, *Thou art the man*.

But he comes in the following verses to assist them in the application of it to themselves; he doth not call them liars, but shews them that they were no friends to truth, and therein resembled him, who abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

Two things he chargeth upon them.

1. That they would not believe the word of truth, ver. 45. οὐτις ἔδιδόκειαν λέγειν, ἡ πιστεύει μοι. Two ways it may be taken, (1.) Though I tell you the truth, yet you will not believe me (οὐτις) that I do so. Though he gave abundant proof of his commission from God, and his affection to the children of men, yet they would not believe that he told them the truth. Now was truth fallen in the street, and could not enter, Isa. lix. 14, 15. The greatest truths with some gained the least credit; for they rebelled against the light, Job xxiv. 13. Or, (2.) Because I tell you the truth (so we read it) therefore ye believe me not. They would not receive him, nor entertain him as a prophet, because he told them some displeasing truths, which they did not care to hear of, told them the truth, concerning themselves and their own case, shewed them their faces in a glass, that would not flatter them; therefore they would not believe a word he said. Miserable is the case of those to whom the light of divine truth is become a torment.

Now to shew them the unreasonableness of their infidelity, he condescends to put the matter to this fair issue, ver. 46. He and they being contrary, either he was in an error, or they were. Now take it either way.

1. If he were in an error, why did not they convince him? The falshood of pretending prophets was discovered either by the ill tendency of their doctrines, Deut. xiii. 2. Or by the ill tenor of their conversation, ye shall know them by their fruits; but (saith Christ) which of you, you of the Sanhedrin, that take upon you to judge of prophets, which of you convinceth me of sin? They accused him of some of the worst of crimes, gluttony, drunkenness, blasphemy, sabbath-breaking, confederacy with Satan, and what not? But they were all malicious, groundless calumnies, and such as every one that knew him knew to be utterly false. When they had done their utmost by trick and artifice, subornation and perjury to prove some crime upon him, the very judge that condemned him, owned he found no fault in him.

The sin he here challengeth them to convict him of is, (1.) An inconsistent doctrine. They had heard his testimony, could they shew any thing in it absurd, or unworthy to be believed? any contradiction, either of himself, or of the scriptures, or any corruption of truth or manners insinuated by his doctrine. John xviii. 20. Or, (2.) An incongruous conversation. Which of you can justly charge me with any thing in word or deed, unbecoming a prophet. See the wonderful condescension of our Lord Jesus, that he demanded not credit any further than the allowed motives of credibility support his demands. See Jer. ii. 5, 33. Mic. vi. 3. Ministers may from hence learn, (1.) To walk so circumspectly, as that it may not be in the power of their most strict observers to convince them of sin, that the ministry be not blamed. The only way not to be convicted of sin is not to sin.

(2.) To be willing to admit a scrutiny, though we are confident in many things that we are in the right, yet we should be willing to have it tried whether we be not in the wrong. See Job vi. 24. 2. If they were in an error, why were not they convinced by him? If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? If you cannot convince me of error, you must own that I say the truth, and why do ye not then give me credit? Why will ye not deal with me upon trust? Note, If men would but enquire into the reasons of their infidelity, and examine why they do not believe that

which yet they cannot gainsay, they would find themselves reduced to such absurdities, as they could not but be ashamed of; for it will be found, that the reason why we believe not in Jesus Christ, is because we are not willing to part with our sins, and deny our selves, and serve God faithfully; that we are not of the Christian religion, because we would not indeed be of any, and unbelief of our Redeemer resolves itself into a downright rebellion against our Creator.

2. Another thing charged upon them is, that they would not hear the words of God, ver. 47. which further shews how groundless their claim of relation to God was. Here is,

1. A doctrine laid down. He that is of God, heareth God's words; that is, (1.) He is willing and ready to hear them, is sincerely desirous to know what the mind of God is, and cheerfully embraceth whatever he knows to be so. God's words have such an authority over, and such an agreeableness with all that are born of God, that they meet them, as the child Samuel did with, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth*. Let the word of the Lord come. (2.) He apprehends and discerns them, he so hears them, as to perceive the voice of God in them, which the natural man doth not, 1 Cor. ii. 14. He that is of God, is soon aware of the discoveries he makes of himself, of the nearness of his name, Psal. lxxv. 1. As they of the family know the master's tread, and the master's knock, and open to him immediately, Luke xii. 36. As the sheep know the voice of their shepherd from that of a stranger, John x. 4, 5. Cant. ii. 8.

2. The application of this doctrine for the conviction of these unbelieving Jews, *Ye therefore hear him not*; that is, ye heed not, ye understand not, ye believe not the words of God, nor care to hear them, because ye are not of God. Your being thus deaf and dead to the words of God, is a plain evidence that ye are not of God. It is in his word that God manifests himself, and is present among us, we are therefore reckoned to be well or ill affected to God, according as we are ill affected to his word; see 2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 John iv. 6. Or, their not being of God was the reason, why they did not profitably hear the words of God, which Christ spoke; therefore they did not understand and believe him, not because the things themselves were obscure, or wanted evidence, but because the hearers were not of God, were not born again. If the word of the kingdom do not bring forth fruit, the blame is to be laid upon the soil, not upon the seed, as appears by the parable of the sower, Matt. xiii. 3.

48. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49. Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Here is, 1. The malice of hell breaking out in the base language, which the unbelieving Jews gave to our Lord Jesus. Hitherto they had cavilled at his doctrine, and had made invidious remarks upon that, but having shewed themselves uneasy, when he complained, ver. 43, 47. that they would not hear him, now at length they fall to downright railing, ver. 48. They were not the common people, but, as it should seem, the scribes and Pharisees, the topping men, who when they saw themselves convicted of an obstinate infidelity, scornfully turned off the conviction with this, *Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil!* See here, see it and wonder, see it and tremble.

1. What was the blasphemous character commonly given of our Lord Jesus, among the wicked Jews, to which they refer.

(1.) That he was a Samaritan, i. e. that he was an enemy to their church and nation, one that they hated, and could not endure. Thus they exposed him to the ill will of the people, with whom you could not put a man into a worse name, than to call him a Samaritan. If he had been a Samaritan, he had been punishable, by the beating of the rebels, (as they called it) for coming into the temple. They had often called him a Galilean, a mean man, but as if that were not enough, though it contradicted the other, they will have him a Samaritan, an ill man. The Jews to this day call the Christians in reproach, Cuthæi, Samaritans. Note, Great endeavours have in all ages been used to make good people odious, by putting them under black characters, and it is easy to run that down with a crowd and a cry, which it once put into an ill name. Perhaps because Christ justly inveighed against the pride and tyranny of the priests and elders, they hereby suggest that he aimed at the ruin of their church, in aiming at his reformation, and was falling away to the Samaritans.

(2.) That he had a devil. Either, (1.) That he was in league with the devil; having reproached his doctrine as tending to Samaritanism, here they reflect upon his miracles as done in combination with Beelzebub. Or rather, (2.) That he was possessed with a devil, that he was a melancholy man, whose brain was clouded, or a mad man, whose brain was heated, and that which he said was no more to be believed, than the extravagant rambles of a distracted man, or one in a delirium. Thus the divine revelation



of those things, which are above the discovery of reason, have been oft branded with the charge of *enthusiasm*, and the prophet was called a *mad fellow*, 2 Kings ix. 11. Hof. ix. 7. The inspiration of the pagan oracles and prophets was indeed a frenzy, and those that had it, were for the time beside themselves, but that which was truly *divine* was nothing so. *Wisdom is justified of her children*, as wisdom indeed.

2. How they undertook to justify this character, and applied it to the present occasion, *Say we not well that thou art so*. One would think his excellent discourses should have altered their opinion of him, and have made them *recant*; but instead of that, their hearts were more hardened, and their prejudices confirmed. They value themselves by their enmity to Christ, as if they had never spoken *better* than when they spoke the worst they could of Jesus Christ. Those have arrived to the highest pitch of wickedness, who *avow* their impiety, *repeat* what they should *retract*, and *justify* themselves in that for which they ought to *condemn* themselves. It is bad to say and do ill, but it is worse to *stand to it*. I do *well to be angry*. When Christ spoke with so much boldness against the sins of the great men, and thereby incensed them against him, they who were sensible of no interest but what is secular and sensual, concluded him *beside himself*, for they think none but a mad man will lose his preferment, and hazard his life for his religion and conscience.

2. Here is the meekness and mercifulness of heaven, shining in Christ's reply to this vile calumny, *ver. 45—50*.

1. He denies their charge against him; *I have not a devil*; as Paul, *Acts xxvi. 25. I am not mad*. The imputation is unjust, I am neither acted by a devil, nor in compact with one; and this he evidenced by what he did against the devil's kingdom. He takes no notice of their calling him a Samaritan, because it was a calumny that disproved it self, it was a personal reflexion, and not worth taking notice of, but saying he had a devil reflected on his commission, and therefore he answered that. St. Augustin gives this descant upon his not saying any thing to their calling him a Samaritan, that he was indeed that good Samaritan spoken of in the parable, *Luke x. 35*.

2. He asserts the sincerity of his own intentions. But *I honour my Father*. They suggested that he took undue honours to himself, and derogated from the honour due to God only, both which he *denies* here in saying, that he made it his business to honour his Father, and him only. It also proves that he *had not a devil*, for if he had, he would not honour God. Note, They who can truly say they make it their constant care to honour God, are sufficiently armed against the censures and reproaches of men.

3. He complains of the wrong they did him by their calumnies, *ye do dishonour me*. By this it appears, that as man, he had a tender sense of the disgrace and indignity done him, reproach was a sword in his bones, and yet he underwent it for our salvation. It is the will of God, that *all men should honour the Son*, yet there are many that *dishonour him*; such a contradiction is there in the carnal mind to the will of God. Christ honoured his Father so as never man *did*, and yet was himself dishonoured so as never man *was*; for though God has promised that those that honour him he will honour, he never promised that men should honour them.

4. He clears himself from the imputation of vain-glory, in saying this concerning himself, *ver. 50*. See here,

(1.) His *contempt* of worldly honour; *I seek not mine own glory*, he did not aim at that in what he had said of himself, or against his persecutors; he did not court the applause of men, nor covet preferment in the world, but industriously declined both. He did not *seek his own glory* distinct from his Father's, nor had any *separate interest* of his own. For men to *search their own glory*, is not glory indeed, *Prov. xxv. 27*. but their shame rather, to be so much *out in their aim*. This comes in here as a reason, why Christ made so light of their reproaches, *you do dishonour me*, but cannot disturb me, shall not disquiet me, for *I seek not mine own glory*. Note, Those that are dead to mens praise, can safely bear their contempt.

(2.) His *comfort* under worldly dishonour, *there is one that seeketh and judgeth*. In two things Christ made it appear he *sought not his own glory*, and here he tells us what satisfied him as to both. (1.) He did not *court* mens respects, but was indifferent to them, and in reference to this he saith, *there is one that seeketh*, that will secure and advance my interest in the esteem and affections of the people, while I am in no care about it. Note, God will *seek* their honour, that do not seek *their own*; for before honour is humility. (2.) He did not *revenge* mens affronts, but was unconcerned at them, and in reference to this he saith, *there is one that judgeth*, that will vindicate my honour, and severely reckon with those that trample upon it; probably he refers here to the judgments that were coming upon the nation of the Jews, for the indignities they did to the Lord Jesus. See *Psal. xxxviii. 13, 14, 15. I heard not, for thou wilt hear*. If we undertake to judge for our selves, whatever damage we sustain, our amends is in our own hands; but if we be, as we ought to be, humble appellants, and patient expectants, we shall find to our comfort, *there is one that judgeth*.

51. Verily, verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 52. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. 53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thy self? 54. Jesus answered, If I honour my self, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God: 55. Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. 56. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. 57. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58. Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

In these verses we have,

First, The doctrine of the immortality of believers laid down, *ver. 51*. It is ushered in with the usual solemn preface, *Verily, verily I say unto you*, which commands both attention and assent, and this is it he saith, *If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death*. Where we have,

1. The *character* of a believer, he is one that *keeps the sayings of the Lord Jesus*, *καὶ λόγον καὶ ἐμὸν*, my word; that word of mine which I have delivered to you; this we must not only *receive*, but *keep*; not only *have* but *hold*. We must keep it in mind and memory, keep it in love and affection, so keep it as in nothing to violate it, or go contrary to it. Keep it *without spot*, 1 Tim. vi. 19. keep it as a trust committed to us; keep in it as our way, keep to it as our rule.

2. The *privilege* of a believer. *He shall by no means see death for ever*. So it is in the original. Not as if the bodies of believers were secured from the stroke of death, no, even the *children of the most High* must *die like men*, and the followers of Christ have been more than other men, in deaths oft, and *killed all the day long*; how then is this promise made good, that they *shall not see death*? Ans. 1. The *property* of death is so altered to them, that they do not see it *as death*, they do not see the terror of death, it is quite taken off; their sight doth not *terminate* in death as theirs doth who *live by sense*; no, they look so clearly, so comfortably *through* death, and *beyond* death, and are so taken up with their state on the other side death, that they overlook death, and *see it not*. 2. The power of death is so broken, as that though there is no remedy, but they must *see death*, yet they shall not see death *for ever*, shall not be always shut up under its arrests, the day will come when *death shall be swallowed up in victory*. 3. They are perfectly delivered from *eternal death*, shall not be *hurt of the second death*. That is the death especially meant here, that death which is *for ever*, which is opposed to everlasting life, this they shall never see, for they shall *never come into condemnation*; they shall have their everlasting lot, where there will be *no more death*, where they *cannot die any more*, *Luke xx. 36*. Though now they cannot avoid seeing death, and tasting it too, yet they shall shortly be there where it will be *seen no more for ever*, *Exod. xiv. 13*.

Secondly, The Jews cavil at this doctrine. Instead of laying hold on this precious promise of immortality, which the nature of man has an ambition of; who is there that doth not love life, and dread the sight of death? They lay hold on this occasion to reproach him that makes them so kind an offer. *Now we know that thou hast a devil, Abraham is dead*. Observe here,

1. Their *railing*; *now we know that thou hast a devil*, that thou art a mad man, thou ravest, and sayest thou knowest not what. See how these swine trample under foot the precious pearls of gospel promises. If now at last they had evidence to prove him *mad*, why did they say, *ver. 48*. before they had that proof, *thou hast a devil*? But this is the method of malice, first to *fasten* an invidious charge, and then to *fish* for evidence of it; *now we know that thou hast a devil*. If he had not abundantly proved himself a *teacher come from God*; his promises of immortality to his credulous followers might justly have been ridiculed, and charity it self would have imputed them to a crazed fancy, but his doctrine was evidently divine, his miracles confirmed it, and the Jews religion taught them to expect such a prophet, and to believe in him; for them therefore thus to reject him, was to abandon that promise, to which their *twelve tribes hoped to come*, *Acts xxvi. 7*.

2. Their *reasoning*, and the colour they had to *run him down* thus. In short, they look upon him as guilty of an insufferable piece of arrogance, in making himself greater than *Abraham and the prophets*. *Abraham is dead, and the prophets*, they are dead too,



too, very true, by the same token that these Jews were the genuine offspring of those that killed them. Now, 1. It is true that Abraham and the prophets were great men, great in the favour of God, and great in the esteem of all good men. 2. It is true that they *kept God's sayings*, and were obedient to them; and yet, 3. It is true they *died*, they never pretended to have, much less to give, immortality, but every one in his own order was *gathered to his people*. It was their honour that they *died in faith*, but *die they must*. Why should a good man be afraid to die, when Abrrham is dead, and the prophets dead? They have *tracked* the way through that darksome valley, which should reconcile us to death, and help to take off the terror of it. Now they think Christ talks madly, when he saith, *if a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste death*. *Tasting* death means the same thing with *seeing* it; and well may death be represented as grievous to *several* of the senses, which is the destruction of them *all*.

Now their arguing goes upon two mistakes.

1. They understood Christ of an immortality in this world, and that was a mistake. In the sense that Christ spoke, it was not true that *Abraham and the prophets were dead*, for God is still the *God of Abraham*, and the *God of the holy prophets*, Rev. xxii. 6. Now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, therefore Abraham and the prophets are still alive, and as Christ meant it, they had not *seen* nor *tasted* death.

2. They thought none could be greater than Abraham and the prophets, whereas they could not but know that the Messiah would be greater than Abraham, or any of the prophets, who did virtuously, but he excelled them all; nay, they borrowed their greatness from him. It was the honour of Abraham, that he was the Father of the Messiah, and the honour of the prophets, that they testified before hand concerning him; so that he certainly obtained a far more excellent name than they. Therefore instead of inferring from Christ's making himself greater than Abraham, that he had a *devil*, they should have inferred from his proving himself so, by doing the works which neither Abraham nor the prophets ever did, that he was the Christ; but their eyes were blinded.

They scornfully asked, *whom makest thou thy self?* As if he had been guilty of pride and vain-glory, whereas he was so far from making himself greater than he was, that he now drew a veil over his own glory, emptied himself, and made himself less than he was, and was the greatest example of humility that ever was.

Thirdly, Christ's reply to this cavil; still he vouchsafes to reason with them, that every mouth may be stopped. No doubt he could have struck them dumb or dead upon the spot, but this was the *day of his patience*.

1. In his answer he insists not upon his own testimony concerning himself, but waves it as not sufficient or conclusive, ver. 54. *If I honour my self, my honour is nothing*, εὐὼν ἐγὼ δόξαζω. *If I glorify my self*. Note, Self-honour is no honour; and the affectation of glory is both the forfeiture and the defeasance of it, it is *not* glory, Prov. xxv. 27. but so great a reproach, that there is no sin which men are more industrious to hide than this; he that most affects praise, yet would not be thought to do it. Honour of our own creating is a meer chimera, has nothing in it, and therefore is called *vain-glory*. Self-admirers are *self-deceivers*. Our Lord Jesus was not one that *honoured himself*, as they represented him; he was *crowned* by him who is the fountain of honour, and glorified not himself to be made a high-priest, Heb. v. 4, 5.

2. But he refers himself to *his Father, God*; and to *their father, Abraham*.

1. To his Father, God. *It is my Father that honoureth me*. By this he means, (1.) That he *derived* from his Father all the honour he now claimed; he had commanded them to believe in him, to follow him, and to keep his word, all which put an honour upon him, but it was the Father that *laid help* upon him, that *lodged all fulness* in him, that sanctified him, and sealed him, and sent him into the world to receive all the honours due to the Messiah, and this justified him in all these demands of respect. (2.) That he *depended* upon his Father for all the honour he further *looked for*; he courted not the applauses of the age, but despised them, for his eye and heart were upon the glory which the Father had promised him, and *which he had with the Father before the world was*. He aimed at an advancement, with which the Father was to *exalt him*, a name he was to *give him*, Phil. ii. 8, 9. Note, Christ and all that are his depend upon God for their honour; and he that is sure of honour where he is known, cares not though he be slighted, where he is in disguise.

Appealing thus often to his Father, and his Father's testimony of him, which yet the Jews did not admit or give credit to, he here takes occasion to shew,

1. The reason of *their* incredulity, notwithstanding *this* testimony, and that was their *unacquaintedness* with God, q. d. But what should I talk to you of my Father's honouring me, when he is one you know nothing of? You say of him that he is *our God*, yet you have not known him. Where observe,

(1.) The profession they made of relation to God. *Ye say he is our God*, the God you have chosen, and are in covenant with; No. xc.

ye say ye are Israel, but all are not so indeed that are of Israel. Rom. ix. 6. Note, Many pretend to have an interest in God and say he is *theirs*, who yet have no just cause to say so. They who called themselves the *temple of the Lord*, having *profaned the excellency of Jacob*, did but trust in lying words. What will it avail us to say he is *our God*, if we be not in sincerity *his people*, nor such as he will own.

Christ mentions here their profession of relation to God, as that which was an aggravation of their unbelief. All people will honour those whom their God honours; but these Jews, who said that the Lord was their God, yet studied how to put the utmost disgrace upon one whom their God put honour upon. Note, The profession we make of a covenant-relation of God, and interest in him, if it be not improved *by us*, will be improved *against us*.

(2.) Their ignorance of him, and estrangement from him, notwithstanding this profession. *Yet ye have not known him*. 1. *Ye know him not at all*. These Pharisees were so taken up with the study of their traditions concerning things foreign and trifling, that they never minded the most needful and useful knowledge; like the false prophets of old, who *caused people to forget God's name by their dreams*, Jer. xxiii. 27. Or, 2. *Ye know him not aright*, but mistake concerning him, and that is as bad as not knowing him at all, or worse. Men may be able to dispute subtilly concerning God, and yet may think him such a one as themselves, and *not know him*. Ye say he is *yours*, and it is natural to us to desire to know *our own*, yet ye *know him not*. Note, There are many who *claim kindred* to God, who yet have no acquaintance with him. It is only the name of God which they have learned to talk of, and to hector with; but for the nature of God, his attributes and perfections, and relations to his creatures, they know nothing of the matter; we *speak this to their shame*, 1 Cor. xv. 34. Multitudes satisfy themselves, but deceive themselves with a titular relation to an *unknown God*.

This Christ chargeth upon the Jews here, (1.) To shew how vain and groundless their pretensions of relation to God were. You say he is yours, but you give your selves the lye, for it is plain you do not know him; and we reckon a cheat is effectually convicted, if it be found that he is ignorant of the persons he pretends alliance to. (2.) To shew the true reason why they were not wrought upon by Christ's doctrine and miracles. They knew not God, and therefore perceived not the image of God, nor the voice of God in Christ. Note, The reason why men receive not the *gospel of Christ*, is because they have not the *knowledge of God*. Men therefore *submit not to the righteousness of Christ*, because they are *ignorant of God's righteousness*, Rom. x. 3. They that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ, are put together, 2 Thes. i. 8.

2. He gives them the reason of *his* assurance, that his Father would *honour him* and *own him*. *But I know him*; and again, *I know him*; which speaks, not only his *acquaintance* with him, having lain in his bosom, but his *confidence* in him, to stand by him, and bear him out in his whole undertaking; as was prophesied concerning him, Isa. l. 7, 8. *I know that I shall not be ashamed*, for he is near that justifies; and as Paul, *I know whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. i. 12. I know him to be faithful, and powerful, and heartily engaged in the cause which I know to be *his own*. Observe,

1. How he *professeth* his knowledge of his Father with the greatest certainty, as one that was neither afraid, nor ashamed to own it. *If I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you*. He would not deny his relation to God to humour the Jews, and to avoid their reproaches, and prevent further trouble; nor would he retract what he had said, or confess himself either deceived, or a deceiver; if he should, he would be found a false witness against God and himself. Note, They who disown their religion, and relation to God, as Peter, are liars as much as hypocrites are, who pretend to know him when they do not. See 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. Mr. Clark observes well upon this, that it is a great sin to deny God's grace in us.

2. How he *proves* his knowledge of his Father, *I know him and keep his saying*; or, *his word*. Christ, as man, was obedient to the moral law; and, as Redeemer, to the mediatorial law; and in both he kept *his Father's word*, and *his own word* with the Father. Christ requires of us, ver. 51. that we *keep his sayings*; and he hath set before us a copy of obedience, a copy without a blot, he *kept his Father's sayings*; well might he who *learned obedience* teach it; see Heb. v. 8, 9. Christ by this evidenceth that he knew the Father. Note, The best proof of our acquaintance with God is our obedience to him. Those only know God aright that keep his word; it is a ruled case, 1 John ii. 3. *Hereby we know that we know him*, (and do not only fancy it) *if we keep his commandments*.

2. Christ refers them to *their father* whom they boasted so much of a relation to, and that was Abraham, and this closeth the discourse.

1. Christ asserts Abraham's prospect of him, and respect to him, ver. 56. *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad*. And by this he proves that he was not at all out of the way, when he made himself greater than Abraham.



Two things he here speaks of as instances of that patriarch's respect to the promised Messiah.

1. The ambition he had to *see his day, be rejoiced, ἡγαλλιάσατο, he leaped at it.* The word, though it commonly signifies *rejoicing*, yet here must signify rather a transport of *desire*, than of *joy*, for otherwise the latter part of the verse would be a tautology, he *saw it and was glad*: He *reached out, or stretched himself forth*; that he might *see my day*; as Zaccheus, that ran before and climbed the tree to *see Jesus*. The notices he had received of the Messiah to come, had raised in him an expectation of something *great*, which he earnestly longed to know more of. The dark *intimation* of that which is *considerable*, puts men upon *enquiry*, and makes them earnestly ask *who? and what? and where? and when? and how?* And thus the prophets of the Old Testament having a general idea of a grace that should *come, searched diligently*, 1 Pet. i. 10. and Abraham was as industrious herein as any of them. God told him of a land that he would give his posterity, and of the wealth and honour he designed them, Gen. xv. 14. but he never *leaped* thus to *see that day*, as he did to *see the day* of the Son of man. He could not look with so much indifferency upon the *promised seed*, as he did upon the *promised land*, in that he was, but to the other he could not be contentedly, a *stranger*. Note, Those who rightly know *any thing* of Christ, cannot but be earnestly desirous to know *more* of him. Those who discern the dawning of the light of the Sun of righteousness, cannot but wish to see his rising. The mystery of redemption is that which *angels desire to look into*, much more should we that are more immediately concerned in it. Abraham desired to see Christ's day, though it was at a great distance, but this degenerate seed of his discerned not his day, not bid it welcome when it came. The appearing of Christ, which gracious souls love, and long for, carnal hearts dread and loath.

2. The satisfaction he had in what he did see of it. *He saw it, and was glad.* Observe here,

1. How God gratified the pious desire of Abraham; he longed to see Christ's day, and he *saw it*. Though he saw it not so plainly, and fully, and distinctly as we now see it under the gospel, yet he saw something of it, more *afterwards* than he did at first. Note, To him that *hath*, and to him that *asks*, shall be *given*; to him that *useth*, and improveth what he hath, and that *desireth* and prayeth for more of the knowledge of Christ, God will give more. But how did Abraham see Christ's day? (1.) Some understand it of the sight he had of it in the other world: The separate soul of Abraham, when the veil of flesh was rent, saw the mysteries of the kingdom of God in heaven. Calvin mentions this sense of it, and doth not much disallow it. Note, The longings of gracious souls after Jesus Christ, will be fully satisfied when they come to heaven, and not till then. But, (2.) It is more commonly understood of some sight he had of *Christ's day* in this world. They that *received not the promises*, yet *saw them afar off*, Heb. xi. 13. Balaam saw Christ, but not *now*, not *nigh*. There is room to conjecture that Abraham had some vision of Christ and his day for his own private satisfaction, which is not, nor must be, recorded in his story, like that of Daniel's, which must be *shut up, and sealed unto the time of the end*, Dan. xii. 4. Christ knew what Abraham saw better than Moses did. But there are divers things recorded, in which Abraham saw more of that which he longed to see, than he did when the promise was first made to him. He saw in Melchizedek, one *made like unto the Son of God*, and a priest for ever; he saw an appearance of Jehovah, attended with two angels, in the plains of Mamre. In the prevalency of his intercession for Sodom, he saw a specimen of Christ's intercession; in the casting out of Ishmael, and the establishment of the covenant with Isaac, he saw a figure of the gospel-day, which is Christ's day, for these things were an allegory. In offering Isaac, and the ram instead of Isaac, he saw a double type of the great sacrifice; and his calling the place *Jehovah-jireh, it shall be seen*, intimates that he saw something more in it than others did, which time would produce; and in making his servant *put his hand under his thigh*, when he swore he had a regard to the Messiah.

2. How Abraham entertained these discoveries of Christ's day, and bid them welcome; *he saw, and was glad.* He was glad of what he *saw* of God's favour to himself, and glad of what he *fore-saw* of the mercy God had in store for the world. Perhaps this refers to Abraham's laughing when God assured him of a son by Sarah, Gen. xvii. 16, 17. for that was not a laughter of distrust, as Sarah's, but of joy; in that promise he saw Christ's day, and it *filled him with joy unspeakable*. Thus he *embraced the promises*. Note, A believing sight of Christ and his day, will put gladness into the heart. No joy like the joy of faith; we are never acquainted with true pleasure, till we are acquainted with Christ.

2. The Jews cavil at this, and reproach him for it, ver. 57. *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* Here, 1. They suppose that if Abraham saw him and his day, he also had seen Abraham, and yet was not a necessary innuendo, but this turn of his words would best serve to expose him; yet it was true that Christ had seen Abraham, and had talked with him as a man talks with his friend. 2. They suppose it a

very absurd thing for him to pretend to have seen Abraham, who was *dead* so many ages before he was born. The state of the dead is an *invisible* state; but here they run upon the old mistake, understanding that corporally, which Christ spoke spiritually: Now this gave them occasion to *despise his youth*, and to upbraid him with it, as if he were *but of yesterday, and knew nothing*. *Thou art not yet fifty years old*: They might as well have said thou art not forty; for he was now but thirty two, or thirty three years old. As to this, Irenæus, one of the first fathers, with this passage, supports the tradition, which he saith he had from some that had conversed with St. John, that our Saviour lived to be fifty years old, which he contends for, *Advers. Hæres. l. 2. c. 39, 40.* See what little credit is to be given to tradition; and as to this here, the Jews spoke *at random*; some year they would mention, and therefore pitched upon one that they thought he was far enough short of; he did not look to be forty, but they were sure he could not be fifty, much less contemporary with Abraham. Old age is reckoned to begin at fifty, Numb. iv. 47. so that they mean no more, but thou art not to be reckoned an old man; many of us are much thy seniors, and yet pretend not to have seen Abraham. Some think that his countenance was so altered with grief, and watching, that together with the gravity of his aspect, it made him look like a man of fifty years old: *His visage was so marred*, Isa. lii. 14.

3. Our Saviour gives an effectual answer to this cavil, by a solemn asserting of his own seniority, even to Abraham himself. ver. 58. *Verily, verily I say unto you*; I do not only say it in private to my own disciples, who will be sure to say as I say, but *to you* my enemies and persecutors; I say it to your faces, take it how you will, *Before Abraham was, I am*; *πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμι, Before Abraham was made or born, I am.* The change of the word is observable, and speaks Abraham a creature, and himself the Creator, well therefore might he make himself *greater than Abraham*; *before Abraham he was*, (1.) As God. *I am* is the name of God, Exod. iii. 14. it speaks his self-existence; he doth not say *I was*, but *I am*, for he is the first and the last, immutably the same, Rev. i. 8. thus he was not only before Abraham, but before *all worlds*, Prov. viii. 23. John i. 1. (2.) As Mediator. He was the appointed Messiah long before Abraham; the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. the chanel of conveyance of light, life, and love from God to man. This supposeth his divine nature, that he is the same in himself from eternity, Heb. xiii. 8. and adds, that he is the same to man ever since the fall; he was made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to Adam, and Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Shem, and all the patriarchs that lived and died by faith in him before Abraham was born. Abraham was the root of the Jewish nation, the rock out of which they were hewn. If Christ was before Abraham, his doctrine and religion was no novelty, but was in the substance of it prior to Judaism, and ought to take place of it.

4. This great word ended the dispute *abruptly*, and put a period to it; they could bear to hear no more from him, and he needed to say no more to them, having witnessed this good confession, which was sufficient to support all his claims. One would think Christ's discourse, in which shone so much both of grace and glory, should have captivated them all; but their inveterate prejudice against the holy, spiritual doctrine, and law of Christ, which were so contrary to their pride and worldliness, baffled all the methods of conviction. Now was fulfilled that prophecy, Mal. iii. 1, 2. That when the messenger of the covenant should *come to his temple*, they *would not abide the day of his coming*, because he would be *like a refiner's fire*. Observe here,

1. How they were *enraged* at Christ for what he said; *They took up stones to cast at him*, ver. 59. Perhaps they looked upon him as a blasphemer, and such were indeed to be stoned, Lev. xxiv. 16. but they must be first legally tried and convicted; farewell justice and order, if every man pretend to execute a law at his pleasure: Besides, they had said but just now, that he was a distracted, cracked-brain man, and if so, it was against all reason and equity to punish him as a malefactor for what he said. *They took up stones*. Dr. Lightfoot will tell you how they came to have stones so ready in the temple; they had workmen at this time repairing the temple, or making some additions, and the pieces of stone which they hewed off served for this purpose. See here the desperate power of sin and Satan in and over the children of disobedience. Who would think that ever there should be such wickedness as this in men? Such an open and daring rebellion against one that undeniably proved himself to be the Son of God: Thus every one has a *stone* to throw at his holy religion, Acts xxviii. 22.

2. How he made his *escape* out of their hands.

1. He *absconded*; Jesus *hid himself*, ἐκρύβην, *he was hid*, either by the crowd of those that wished well to him, to shelter him. He that ought to have been upon a throne, high and lifted up, is content to be *lost in a crowd*. Or, perhaps he concealed himself behind some of the walls, or pillars of the temple; *In the secret of his tabernacle he shall hide me*, Psal. xxvii. 5. Or, by a divine power, casting a mist before their eyes he made himself invisible to them. *When the wicked rise, a man is hidden*, a wise and good man, Prov. xxviii. 12, 28. Not that Christ was afraid, or

ashamed



ashamed to stand by what he had said, but his *hour was not yet come*, and he would countenance the flight of his ministers and people in times of persecution, when they are called to it. The Lord hid Jeremiah and Baruch, *Jer. xxxvi. 26.*

2. He departed; he went out of the temple, going through the midst of them undiscovered, and so passed by. This was not a cowardly, inglorious flight, not such as argued either guilt or fear. It was foretold concerning him, that he should not fail nor be discouraged, *Isa. xlii. 4.* But, 1. It was an instance of his power over his enemies, and that they could do no more against him than he gave them leave to do; by which it appears, that when afterwards he was taken in their pits, he offered himself, *John x. 18.* They now thought they had him sure, and yet he passed through the midst of them, either their eyes blinded, or their hands tied, and thus he left them to vex like a lion disappointed of his prey. 2. It was an instance of his prudent provision for his own safety, when he knew his work was not done, nor his testimony finished, thus he gave an example to his own rule, *when they persecute you in one city, flee to another; nay, if occasion be, to a wilderness*, for so Elijah did, *1 Kings xiv. 3, 4.* and the woman the church, *Rev. xii. 6.* When they took up loose stones to throw at Christ, he could have commanded the fixed stones which did cry out of the wall against them, to avenge his cause, or the earth to open and swallow them up; but he chose to accommodate himself to the state he was in, to make the example imitable by the prudence of his followers, without a miracle. 3. It was a righteous deserting of those, that (worse than the Gadarens, who prayed him to depart) stoned him from among them. Christ will not long stay with those that bid him be gone. Christ did again visit the temple after this, as one loth to depart, he bid oft farewell, but at last he abandoned it for ever, and left it desolate. Christ now went through the midst of the Jews, and none of them courted his stay, or stirred up themselves to take hold on him, but were even content to let him go. Note, God never forsakes any till they have first provoked him to withdraw, and will have none of him. Calvin observes, that these chief priests, when they had driven Christ out of the temple, valued themselves by the possession they kept of it; but (saith he) those deceive themselves that are proud of a church or temple which Christ has forsaken; *Longe falluntur, cum templum se habere putant Deo vacuum.* When Christ left them, it is said he so passed by silently and unobserved; *παρῆγεν ἔκτως*, so that they were not aware of him. Note, Christ's departures from a church, or a particular soul, are often secret, and not soon taken notice of. As the kingdom of God comes not, so it goes not with observation. See *Judg. xvi. 20.* Sampson wist not that the Lord was departed from him. Thus it was with these forsaken Jews, God left them, and they never missed them.

### C H A P. IX.

After Christ's departure out of the temple, in the close of the foregoing chapter, and before this happened, which is recorded in this chapter, he had been for some time abroad in the country; it is supposed about two or three months; in which interval of time Dr. Lightfoot, and other harmonists, place all the passages that occur from Luke x. 17. to Luke xiii. 17. What is recorded, John vii. and viii. was at the feast of tabernacles in September; what is recorded in this and the following chapter, was at the feast of dedication in December, chap. x. 22. Mr. Clark, and others, place this immediately after the foregoing chapter. In this chapter we have, (1.) The miraculous cure of a man that was born blind, ver. 1—7. (2.) The discourses which were occasioned by it. (1.) A discourse of the neighbours among themselves, and with the man, ver. 8—12. (2.) Between the Pharisees, and the man, ver. 13—34. (3.) Between Christ and the poor man, ver. 35—38. (4.) Between Christ and the Pharisees, ver. 39. ad fin.

1. **A**ND as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work. 5. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7. And said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

We have here sight given to a poor beggar that had been blind from his birth. Observe,

First, The notice which our Lord Jesus took of the piteous case of this poor blind man; ver. 1. *As Jesus passed by he saw a man which was blind from his birth.* The first words seem to refer to the last of the foregoing chapter, and countenance their opinion, who in the harmony, place this story immediately after that. There it was said, *παρῆγεν, He passed by*, and here, without so much as repeating his name, (though our translators supply it) *ὃς παρῆγεν, and as he passed by.* (1.) Though the Jews had so basely abused him, and both by word and deed gave him the highest provocation imaginable, yet he did not slip any opportunity of doing good among them, nor take up a resolution, as justly he might have done, never to have favoured them with any good offices. The cure of this blind man was a kindness to the publick, enabling him to work for his living, who before was a charge and burthen to the neighbourhood. It is noble and generous, and Christ-like, to be willing to serve the publick, even when we are slighted and disobliged by it, or think ourselves so. (2.) Though he was in a flight from his threatening danger, and escaping for his life, yet he willingly halted and stayed a while to shew mercy to this poor man. We make more haste than good speed, when we out-run opportunities of doing good. (3.) When the Pharisees drove Christ from them, he went to this poor blind beggar. Some of the antients make this a figure of the bringing of the gospel to the Gentiles, who sat in darkness, when the Jews had rejected it, and driven it from them. (4.) Christ took this poor blind man in his way, and cured him in transitu as he passed by. Thus should we take occasions of doing good, even as we pass by, wherever we are.

Now, 1. The condition of this poor man was very sad; he was blind, and had been so from his birth. If the light is sweet, how melancholy must it needs be for a man, all his days, to eat in darkness? He that is blind has no enjoyment of the light, but he that is born blind has no idea of it: Methinks such a one would give a great deal to have his curiosity satisfied with but one day's sight of light, and colours, shapes, and figures, though he were never to see them more. *Why is the light of life given to one that is in this misery, that is deprived of the light of the sun; whose way is thus hid, and whom God hath thus hedged in?* Job iii. 20, 23. Let us bless God that it was not our case. The eye is one of the most curious parts of the body, its structure exceeding nice and fine. In the formation of animals, it is said to be the first part that appears distinctly discernable. What a mercy is it that there was no miscarriage in the making of ours. Christ cured many that were blind by disease or accident, but here he cured one that was born blind. (1.) That he might give an instance of his power to help in the most desperate cases, and to relieve when none else can. (2.) That he might give a specimen of the work of his grace upon the souls of sinners, which gives sight to those that were by nature blind.

2. The compassions of our Lord Jesus towards him were very tender. He saw him, i. e. he took cognizance of his case, and looked upon him with concern. When God is about to work deliverance, he is said to see the affliction; so Christ saw this poor man. Others saw him, but not as he did. This poor man could not see Christ, but Christ saw him, and anticipated both his prayers and expectations with a surprizing cure. Christ is often found of those that seek him not, nor see him, *Isa. lxi. 1.* And if we know or apprehend any thing of Christ, it is because we were first known of him, *Gal. iv. 9.* and apprehended by him, *Phil. iii. 12.*

Secondly, The discourse between Christ and his disciples concerning this man. When he departed out of the temple, they went along with him, for these were they that continued with him in his temptations, and followed him whithersoever he went; and they lost nothing by their adherence to him, but gained experience abundantly. Observe,

1. The question which the disciples put to their Master upon this blind man's case, ver. 2. When Christ looked upon him, they had an eye to him too; Christ's compassions should kindle ours. It is probable Christ told them that this poor man was born blind, or they knew it by common fame; but they did not move Christ to heal him, instead of that, they started a very odd question concerning him, *Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* Now this question of theirs was, 1. *Uncharitably censorious.* They take it for granted, that this extraordinary calamity was the punishment of some extraordinary, uncommon wickedness; and this man was a sinner above all men that dwelt at Jerusalem, *Luke xiii. 14.* For the barbarous people, to infer surely this man is a murderer, was not so strange, but it was inexcusable in them that knew the scriptures, who had read that all things come alike to all, and knew how it was adjudged in Job's case, that the greatest sufferers are not herefore to be looked upon as the greatest sinners. The grace of repentance calls our own afflictions punishments, but the grace of charity calls the afflictions of others trials, unless the contrary is very evident. 2. It was unnecessarily curious. Concluding this calamity to be inflicted for some very heinous crime, they ask who were the criminals, this man, or his parents. And what was this to them? Or what good would it do them to know it? we are apt to be more inquisitive concerning other peoples sins than concerning our own; whereas, it is more our concern to know



know wherefore God contends with us, than wherefore he contends with others; for to judge *our selves* is our duty, but to judge *our brother* is our sin.

They enquire, (1.) Whether this man was punished thus for some sin of his own, either committed, or foreseen before his birth. Some think the disciples were tainted with the Pythagorean notion of the *pre-existence* of souls, and their *transmigration* from one body to another. Was this man's soul condemned to the dungeon of this blind body, to punish it for some great sin committed in another body which it had before animated. The Pharisees seem to have had the same opinion of his case, when they said, *thou wast altogether born in sin*, ver. 34. as if all those, and those only were born in sin, whom nature had *stigmatized*. Or, (2.) Whether he was punished for the wickedness of his parents, which God sometimes *visits upon the children*. It is a good reason why parents should take heed of sin, lest their children smart for them when they are gone. Let not us thus be cruel to our own, as the *ostrich in the wilderness*. Perhaps the disciples asked this, not as believing that this was the punishment of some actual sin of his own, or his parents, but Christ having intimated to another patient that his impotency was the cause of his sin, *John v. 14*. Master, say they, whose sin is the cause of this impotency? Being at a loss what construction to put upon this providence, they desire to be informed. The equity of God's dispensations is always *certain*, for *his righteousness is as the great mountains*, but not always to be *accounted for*, for his judgments are a *great deep*.

2. Christ's answer to this question. He was always *apt to teach*, and to rectify his disciples mistakes.

1. He gives the reason of this poor man's blindness, *neither has this man sinned, nor his parents*; but therefore he was born blind, and hath continued so to this day, that now at last *the works of God should be made manifest in him*, ver. 3. Here Christ, who perfectly knew the secret springs of the divine counsels, has told two things concerning such uncommon calamities.

1. That they are not always inflicted as punishments of sin. The sinfulness of the whole race of mankind doth indeed justify God in all the miseries of human life; so that they who have the least share of them, must say that God is *kind*; and they who have the largest share, must not say he is *unjust*; but many are made much more *miserable* than others in this life, who are not at all more *sinful*. Not but that this man was a sinner, and his parents sinners, but it was not any uncommon guilt that God had an eye to in inflicting this upon him. Note, We must take heed of judging any to be great sinners, merely because they are great sufferers, lest we be found, not only *persecuting those whom God has smitten*, *Psal. lxxix. 26*. but *accusing those whom he hath justified*, and *condemning those for whom Christ died*, which is daring and dangerous, *Rom. viii. 33, 34*.

2. That they are sometimes intended purely *for the glory of God*, and the *manifesting of his works*. God has a sovereignty over all his creatures, and a propriety in them, and may make them serviceable to his glory in such a way as he thinks fit, in doing or suffering; and if God be glorified, either by us or in us, we were not made in *vain*.

This man was *born blind*, and it was worth while for him to be so, and to continue thus long dark, *That the works of God might be manifest in him*. That is, (1.) That the *attributes of God* might be manifested in him. His justice in making sinful man liable to such grievous calamities; his ordinary power and goodness in supporting a poor man under such a grievous and tedious affliction; especially, that his extraordinary power and goodness might be manifested in curing him. Note, The difficulties of providence, otherwise unaccountable, may be resolved into this, God intends in them to *shew himself*, to declare his glory, to make himself to be taken notice of. Those who regard him not in the *ordinary* course of things, are sometimes alarmed by things *extraordinary*. How contentedly then, may a good man be a *loser in his comforts*, while he is sure that thereby God will be one way or other a *gainer in his glory*! (2.) That the counsels of God concerning the Redeemer, might be manifested in him. He was *born blind*, that our Lord Jesus might have the honour of *curing him*, and might therein prove himself sent of God to be the light of the world. Thus the *fall of man* was permitted, and the *blindness* that followed it, that the works of God might be manifest in opening *the eyes of the blind*. It was now a great while since this man was born blind, and yet it never appeared till now *why* he was so. Note, The intentions of providence commonly do not appear till a great while after the event, perhaps *many years* after. The sentences in the book of providence are sometimes *long*, which you must read a great way before you can apprehend the *sense of*.

2. He gives the reason of his own forwardness and readiness to help and heal him, ver. 4, 5. It was not for ostentation, but in pursuance of his undertaking. *I must work the works of him that sent me* (of which this is one) *while it is day*, and working time, *the night cometh*, the period of that day, *when no man can work*. This is not only a reason why Christ was constant in doing good to the souls and bodies of men, but why particularly he did this, though it was the sabbath-day, on which works

of necessity might be done, and he proves this to be a work of necessity.

1. It was his Father's will, *I must work the works of him that sent me*. Note, (1.) The Father, when he sent his Son into the world, gave him *work to do*; he did not come into the world to take state, but to do business; whom God sends he employs, for he sends none to be idle. (2.) The works Christ had to do were the *works of him that sent him*, not only appointed by him, but done for him; he was a worker together with God. (3.) He was pleased to lay himself under the strongest obligations to do the business he was sent about. *I must work*. He engaged his heart in the covenant of redemption, to draw near, and approach to God as Mediator, *Jer. xxx. 21*. Shall we be willing to be *loose*, when Christ was willing to be *bound*? (4.) Christ having laid himself under obligations to do his work, laid out himself with the utmost vigour and industry in his work. He *worked the works* he had to do; did *ἐργάζετο τὰ ἔργα*, made a business of that which was his business. It is not enough to look at our work, and talk over it, but we must work it.

2. Now was his opportunity. *I must work while it is day*; while the time lasts, which is appointed to *work in*, and while the light lasts, which is given to *work by*, Christ himself had his day. (1.) All the business of the *mediatorial kingdom* was to be done within the limits of time, and in this world, for at the end of the world, when time shall be no more, the *kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father*, and the *mystery of God finished*. (2.) All the work he had to do in his own person here on earth, was to be done *before his death*; the time of his living in this world, is *the day* here spoken of. Note, The time of our life is our day, in which it concerns us to do the *work of the day*. Day-time is the proper season for work, *Psal. civ. 22, 23*. during the day of life we must be busy, not waste *day-time*, nor play by *day-light*, it will be time enough to rest when our day is done, for it is *but a day*.

3. The period of his opportunity was at hand, and therefore he would be busy. *The night comes, when no man can work*. Note, The consideration of our death approaching should quicken us to improve all the opportunities of life, both for doing, and getting good. *The night comes*, it will come certainly, may come suddenly, is coming nearer and nearer. We cannot compute how nigh our sun is, it may go down at noon; nor can we promise our selves a twilight, between the day of life, and the night of death. When the night comes we cannot work, because the light afforded us to work by, is *extinguished*, the grave is a land of darkness, and our work cannot be done *in the dark*. And besides, our time allotted us for our work will then be *expired*; when our Master tied us to duty, he tied us to time too; when night comes, *call the labourers*; we must then *shew our work*, and receive according to the things done. In the world of retribution we are no longer probationers; it is too late to *bid*, when the inch of candle is *dropt*. Christ useth this as an argument with himself, to be diligent, though he had no opposition from within to struggle with, much more need have we to work upon our hearts these and the like considerations to quicken us.

4. His business in the world was to enlighten it, ver. 5. *As long as I am in the world*, and that will not be long, *I am the light of the world*. He had said this before, *chap. viii. 12*. He is the *sun of righteousness*, that has not only light in his wings for those that can see, but *healing in his wings*, or *beams*, for those that are blind, and cannot see, therein far exceeding in virtue that great light which *rules by day*. Christ would therefore cure this blind man, the representative of a blind world, because he came to be *the light of the world*, not only to give *light*, but to give *sight*. Now this gives us, (1.) A great encouragement to come to him, as a guiding, quickening, refreshing light. To whom should we look but to him? Which way should we turn our eyes, but to the light? We partake of the sun's light, and so we may of Christ's grace without money, and without price. (2.) A good example of usefulness in the world. What Christ saith of himself, he saith of his disciples, *Ye are lights in the world*, and if so, *Let your light shine*. What were candles made for, but to burn?

Thirdly, The manner of the cure of the blind man, ver. 6, 7. The circumstances of the miracle are singular, and no doubt significant. *When he had thus spoken* for the instruction of his disciples, and the opening of their understandings, then he addressed himself to the opening of the blind man's eyes. He did not defer it till he could do it either more privately for his greater safety, or more publicly for his greater honour, or till the sabbath was past, when it would give less offence; what good we have opportunity of doing, we should do it quickly; he that will never do a good work, till there is nothing to be objected against it, will leave many a good work for ever undone, *Eccl. xi. 4*. In the cure observe,

1. The preparation of the eye-salve. Christ *spit on the ground*, and made *clay of the spittle*. He could have cured him with a word, as he did others, but he chose to do it this way, to shew that



that he is not *tied* to any *method*. He made clay of his own spittle, because there was no water near; and he would teach us not to be nice or curious, but what we have at any time occasion to use, to be willing to take up with that which is *next hand*, if it will but be made to serve the turn. Why should we *go about* for that which may as well be had and done a *nearer way*? Christ's making use of his own spittle intimates that there is healing virtue in every thing that belongs to Christ, clay made of Christ's spittle was much more precious than the balm of Gilead.

2. The application of it to the place; *He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay*. Or, as the margin reads it, *He spread (ἐπέχευσε) he daubed the clay upon the eyes of the blind man*, like a tender physician, he did it himself with his own hand, though the patient was a beggar. Now Christ did this, (1.) To magnify his power in making a blind man to see by that method, which one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind. Daubing clay on the eyes would *close them up*, but never *open them*. Note, The power of God often works by contraries; and he makes men feel their own blindness, before he gives them sight. (2.) To give an intimation that it was his mighty hand, the very same that at first made man out of *the clay*, for by him God made the worlds, both the great world, and man the little world. Man was *formed out of the clay*, and moulded like the clay, and here Christ used the same materials to give sight to the body, that at first he used to give being to it. (3.) To represent and typify the healing and opening the eyes of the mind, by the grace of Jesus Christ. The design of the gospel is to *open mens eyes*, Acts xxvi. 18. Now the eye-salve that doth the work is of Christ's preparing, it is made up, not as this, of his spittle, but of his blood, the blood and water that came out of his pierced side, we must come to Christ for *the eye-salve*, Rev. iii. 18. He only is able, and he only appointed to make it up, Luke iv. 18. The means used in this work are very weak and unlikely, and are made effectual only by the power of Christ; when a dark world was to be enlightened, and nations of blind souls to have their eyes opened, God chose the *foolish things*, and *weak*, and *despised*, for the doing of it. And the method Christ takes is, first to make men feel themselves blind, as this poor man did whose eyes were daubed with clay, and then to give them sight. Paul in his conversion was *struck blind* for three days, and then the *scales fell from his eyes*. The way prescribed for getting spiritual wisdom is, let a man become a fool, that he may be wise. 1 Cor. iii. 18. We must be made uneasy with our blindness, as this man here, and then healed.

3. The directions given to the patient, ver. 7. His physician said to him, *Go, wash in the pool of Siloam*. Not that this washing was needful to affect the cure; but, (1.) Christ would hereby try his obedience; and whether he could with an implicit faith obey the orders of one he was so much a stranger to. (2.) He would likewise try how he stood affected to the tradition of the elders, which taught, and perhaps had taught him (for many that are blind are very knowing) that it was not lawful to wash the eyes, no not with spittle, medicinally on the sabbath-day, much less to go to a pool of water to wash them. (3.) He would hereby represent the method of spiritual healing, in which though the effect is owing purely to his power and grace, yet there is duty to be done by us. Go, search the scriptures, attend upon the ministry, converse with the wise, this is like *washing in the pool of Siloam*. Promised graces must be expected in the way of instituted ordinances. The waters of baptism were to them who had been trained up in darkness, like the *pool of Siloam*, in which they might not only wash and be clean, but *wash, and have their eyes opened*. Hence they that were baptized, are said to be φωτισθέντες, *enlightened*; and the antients called baptism φωτισμός, *illumination*.

Concerning the pool of Siloam, observe, (1.) That it was supplied with water from mount Zion, so that these were the *waters of the sanctuary*, Psal. xlv. 4. living waters which were *healing*, Ezek. xlvii. 9. (2.) That the waters of Siloah had of old signified the throne and kingdom of the house of David, pointing at the Messiah, Isa. viii. 6. and the Jews who *refused the waters of Siloah*, Christ's doctrine and law, and rejoiced in the tradition of the elders. Christ would try this man, whether he would cleave to the waters of Siloam or no. (3.) The evangelist takes notice of the signification of the name, its being interpreted, *sent*; Christ is often call the *sent of God*; the messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1. So that when Christ sent him to the pool of Siloam, he did in effect send him to himself, for Christ is *all in all*, to the healing of souls. Christ, as a prophet, directs us to himself as a priest, *Go wash in the fountain opened*, a fountain of life, not a pool.

4. The patient's obedience to these directions; *He went his way therefore*, probably led by some friend or other; or perhaps he was so well acquainted with Jerusalem, that he could find the way himself, nature oft supplies the want of sight with an uncommon sagacity; and *he washed his eyes*; probably the disciples, or some stander by, informed him, that he who bid him do it, was that Jesus whom he had heard so much of, else he would not have gone at his bidding, on that which looked so like a fool's errand; in confidence of Christ's power, as well as in obedience to his command, he went and washed.

5. The cure effected, *he came seeing*. There is more glory in this concise narrative, *he went and washed, and came seeing*, than

in Cæsar's *Veni, vidi, vici*. When the clay was *washed off* from his eyes, all the other impediments were done away with it; so when the pangs and struggles of the new birth are over, and the pains and terrors of conviction past, the bands of sin fly off with them, and a glorious light and liberty succeed. See here an instance, 1. Of the power of Christ. What cannot he do, who could not only do *this*, but do it *thus*? With a lump of clay laid on either eye, and washed off again, he couched those cataracts immediately, which the most skilful oculist with the finest instrument, and the most curious hand, could not remove. No doubt this is *he that should come*, for by him the blind receive their sight. 2. It is an instance of the virtue of faith and obedience. This man let Christ do what *he* pleased, and did what he appointed him to do, and so was cured. They that would be healed by Christ must be ruled by him. He *came back* from the pool to his neighbours and acquaintance, wondering, and wondered at, he came *seeing*. This represents the benefit gracious souls find in attending on instituted ordinances, according to Christ's appointment; they have gone to the pool of Siloam *weak*, and have come away *strengthened*; have gone *doubting*, and come away *satisfied*; have gone *mourning*, and come away *rejoicing*; gone *trembling*, and come away *triumphing*; have gone *blind*, and come away *seeing*; come away *finding*, Isa. lii. 8.

8. ¶ The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him, that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 9. Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he. 10. Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 11. He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight. 12. Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

Such a wonderful event as the giving of sight to a man born blind, could not but be the talk of the town, and many heeded it no more than they do other town-talk, that is but nine days wonder; but here we are told what the neighbours said of it, for the confirmation of the matter of fact. That which at first was not believed *without scrutiny*, may afterwards be admitted *without scruple*.

Two things are debated in this conference about it.

First, Whether this was the same man that had before been blind, ver. 8. *The neighbours* that lived near the place where he was born and bred, and knew that he had been blind, could not but be amazed when they saw that he had his eye-sight, had it on a sudden, and perfectly; and they said, *Is not this he that sat and begged?* It seems this blind man was a common beggar, being disabled to work for his living; and so discharged from the obligation of the law, that if *any would not work, neither should he eat*. When he could not *go about*, he *sat*; if we cannot *work* for God, we must *sit still* quietly for him. When he could not labour, his parents being not able to maintain him, he *begged*. Note, Those who cannot otherwise subsist, must not like the unjust steward be *ashamed to beg*; let no man be ashamed of any thing but sin. There are some common beggars that are objects of charity, that should be distinguished; and we must not let the bees starve for the sake of the drones, or wasps that are among them.

As to this man, (1.) It was well ordered by providence, that he on whom this miracle was wrought should be a *common beggar*, and so generally known, and remarkable, by which means the truth of the miracle was the better attested, and there were the more to witness against those infidel Jews, who would not believe that *he had been blind*, than if he had been maintained in his father's house. (2.) It was the greater instance of Christ's condescension, that he *seemed* (as I may say) to take more pains about the cure of a common beggar than of others. When it was for the advantage of his miracles that they should be wrought on those that were remarkable, he pitched upon those that were made so by their poverty and misery, not by their dignity.

In answer to this enquiry, (1.) Some said, *This is he*, the very same man, and these are witnesses to the truth of the miracle, for they had long known him *stone blind*. (2.) Others who could not think it possible that a man born blind should thus on a sudden receive his sight, for that reason, and no other, said, *He is not he, but is like him*, and so by their confession, if it be he, it is a great miracle that is wrought upon him. Hence we may take occasion to think, (1.) Of the wisdom and power of providence in ordering such an universal variety of the faces of men and women, so that no two are so like, but that they may be distinguished, which is necessary to society and commerce, and the administration of justice. And, (2.) Of the wonderful change which the converting grace of God makes upon some, who before were very wicked and vile, but are thereby so universally and visibly altered, that one would not take them to be the same persons.



This controversy was soon decided by the man himself, *he said, I am he*, the very man that so lately sat and begged; I am he that was blind, and was an object of the charity of men, but now see, and am a monument of the mercy and grace of God. We do not find that the neighbours appealed to him in this matter, but he hearing the debate, interposed, and put an end to it. It is a piece of justice we owe to our neighbours, to rectify their mistakes, and to set things before them, as far as we are able, in a true light. Applying it spiritually it teacheth us, That those who are savingly enlightened by the grace of God, should be ready to own what they were before that blessed change was wrought, 1 *Tim.* i. 13, 14.

Secondly, How he came to have his eyes opened, *ver.* 10, 11, 12. They will now turn aside and *see this great sight*, and enquire further concerning it. He did not *sound a trumpet* when he did these alms, nor perform his cures *upon a stage*; and yet, like a city upon a hill, they could not be hid.

Two things these neighbours enquire after.

1. The manner of the cure, *How were thine eyes opened?* The works of the Lord being great they ought to be *sought out*, *Psal.* cxi. 2. It is good to observe the way and method of God's works, and they will appear the more wonderful. We may apply it spiritually; it is strange that blind eyes should be opened, but more strange when we consider *how they are opened*; how weak the means are that are used, and strong the opposition that is conquered.

In answer to this he gives them a plain and full account of the matter, *ver.* 11. *A man that is called Jesus made clay,—and I received sight.* Note, Those who have experienced special instances of God's power and goodness in temporal or spiritual things, should be ready upon all occasions to communicate their experiences for the glory of God, and the instruction and encouragement of others. See David's collection of his experiences, his own and others, *Psal.* xxxiv. 4, 5, 6. It is a debt we owe to our benefactor, and to our brethren. God's favours are lost *upon us*, when they are lost *with us*, and go no further.

2. Concerning the author of it, *ver.* 12. *Where is he?* Some perhaps asked this question out of curiosity, where is he that we may *see him*? A man that did such cures as these might well be a *shew*, which one would go a good way for the sight of. Others, perhaps, asked out of *ill will*, where is he, that we may *seize him*? There was a proclamation out for the discovering and apprehending of him, *John* xi. 57. and the unthinking crowd, in spite of all reason and equity, will have *ill thoughts* of those that are put into an *ill name*. Some we hope asked this question out of *good will*; where is he, that we may be acquainted with him? Where is he, that we may come to him, and share in the favours he is so free of?

In answer to this he could say nothing, *I know not*. As soon as Christ had sent him to the pool of Siloam, it should seem, he withdrew immediately, as he did, *chap.* v. 1. and did not stay till the man returned, as if he either *doubted* of the effect, or *waited* for the man's thanks. Humble souls take more pleasure in *doing good*, than in hearing of it again; it will be time enough to hear of it in the *resurrection of the just*. The man had never seen Jesus, for by that time he had gained his sight he had lost his physician; and he asked, it is probable, *where is he?* None of all the new and surprizing objects that presented themselves could be so grateful to him as one sight of Christ, but as yet he knew no more of him, but that he was *called*, and rightly called Jesus, a Saviour. Thus in the work of grace wrought upon the soul we see the change, but *see not the hand* that makes it; for the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind, which thou hearest the sound of, but canst not tell *whence it comes*, or *whither it goes*.

13. ¶ They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14. And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see. 16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner, do such miracles? And there was a division among them. 17. They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. 18. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they had called the parents of him that had received his sight. 19. And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see? 20. His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21. But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know

not: he is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself. 22. These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. 23. Therefore said his parents, He is of age, ask him. 24. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. 25. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. 26. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? 27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? 28. Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses disciples. 29. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. 30. The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. 31. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. 32. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. 34. They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

One would have expected that such a miracle as Christ wrought upon the blind man, should have settled his reputation, and silenced and shamed all opposition, but it had the contrary effect; instead of being embraced as a prophet for it, he is prosecuted as a criminal.

First, Here is the information that was given in to the Pharisees concerning this matter. *Ver.* 13. *They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.* They brought him to the great Sanhedrin, which consisted chiefly of Pharisees, at least the Pharisees in the Sanhedrin were most active against Christ.

1. Some think they that brought this man to the Pharisees, did it with a *good design*, to shew them that this Jesus whom *they prosecuted* was not what they represented him, but really a great man, and one that gave considerable proofs of a divine mission. What hath convinced *us* of the truth and excellency of religion, and hath removed our prejudices against it, we should be forward, as we have opportunity, to offer to others for their conviction.

2. It should seem rather they did it with an *ill design*, to *exasperate* the Pharisees the more against Christ, and that needed not, for they were *bitter* enough of themselves. They brought him with such a suggestion as that, *John* xi. 47, 48. *If ye let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.* Note, Those rulers that are of a persecuting spirit, shall never want ill instruments about them that will blow the coals, and make them worse.

Secondly, The ground which was pretended for this information, and the colour given to it. That which is good was never maligned but under the imputation of something *evil*. And the crime objected here, *ver.* 14. was that, *It was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.* The profanation of the sabbath-day is certainly an ill thing, and gives a man a very ill character; but the traditions of the Jews, had made that to be a violation of the law of the sabbath, which was far from being so. And many a time this matter was contested between Christ and the Jews, that it might be settled for the benefit of the church in all ages. But it may be asked, why would Christ not only work miracles on the sabbath-day, but work them in such a manner as he knew would give offence to the Jews? When he had healed the impotent man, why would he bid him carry his bed? Could he not have cured this blind man without making clay? I answer, (1.) He would not seem to yield to the usurped power of the scribes and Pharisees; their government was illegal, their impositions arbitrary, and their zeal for the rituals consumed the substantials of religion, and therefore Christ would not *give place* to them *by subjection, no not for an hour*. Christ was made under the law of God, but not under *their law*. 2. He did it that he might both by word and action expound the law of the fourth commandment, and vindicate it from their corrupt glosses, and so teach us, both, That a weekly sabbath is to be *perpetually* observed in the church, one day in seven, for what need was there to explain that law, if it must be presently abrogated; and that it is not to be so *ceremonially* observed by us, as it was by the Jews? Works of necessity and mercy are allowed, and the sabbath-rest to be kept, not so much for its own sake, as in order to the sabbath-work. 3. Christ chose to work his cures on



the sabbath-day, to dignify and sanctify the day, and to intimate that spiritual cures should be wrought mostly on the Christian sabbath-day. How many blind eyes have been opened by the preaching of the gospel, that blessed eye-salve, on the Lord's day; how many impotent souls cured on that day?

Thirdly, The trial and examination of this matter by the Pharisees, *ver.* 15. And here appears so much passion and prejudice, and ill humour, and so little reason, that the discourse is nothing but crossing questions. One would think when a man in these circumstances was brought before them, they should have been so taken up in admiring the miracle, and congratulating the happiness of the poor man, that they could not have been peevish with him: But their enmity to Christ had divested them of all manner of humanity, and divinity too. Let us see how they teased this man.

1. They interrogated him concerning the *cure it self*.

(1.) They doubted whether he had indeed been *born blind*, and demanded proof of that, which even the prosecutors had acknowledged. *Ver.* 18. They *did not believe*, i. e. they would not, that he was *born blind*. Men that seek occasion to quarrel with the clearest truths may find it if they please; and they that resolve to *hold fast deceit*, will never want a handle to hold it by. This was not a prudent caution, but a prejudiced infidelity. However, it was a good way they took for the clearing of this, *they called the parents of the man that had received his sight*. This they did in hopes to *disprove* the miracle. These parents were poor and timorous, and if they had said they could not be sure that this was their son; and that it was only some weakness or dimness in his sight that he had been born with, which if they had been able to get help for him, might have been cured long since; or had otherwise prevaricated for fear of the court, the Pharisees had gained their point, had robbed Christ of the honour of *this* miracle, which would have lessened the reputation of all the rest: But God so ordered and over-ruled this counsel of theirs, that it turned to the more effectual proof of the miracle, and left them under a necessity of being either convinced or confounded.

Now in this part of the examination we have,

1. The questions that were put to them. *Ver.* 19. They asked them in an imperious, threatening way, *Is this your son? Dare you swear it? Do you say he was born blind? Are you sure of it? Or did he but pretend to be so, to have an excuse for his begging? How then doth he now see?* That is impossible, and therefore you had better unsay it. Those who cannot bear the light of truth, do all they can to *eclipse* it, and hinder the discovery of it. Thus the *managers of evidence*, or mismanagers rather, lead witnesses out of the way, and teach them how to conceal or disguise the truth, and so involve themselves in a double guilt, like that of Jeroboam, who sinned, and made Israel to sin.

2. Their answers to these interrogatories, in which,

1. They fully *attest* that which they could safely say in this matter; *safely*, i. e. upon their own knowledge, and *safely*, i. e. without running themselves into a *præmunire*; *ver.* 20. *We know that this is our son*, for they were daily conversant with him, and had such a natural affection to him as the *true mother* had, *1 Kings* iii. 26. which made them know it was *their own*, and we know that he was *born blind*. They had reason to know it, by the same token that it had cost them many a sad thought, and many a careful, troublesome hour about him. How often had they looked upon him with grief, and lamented their child's blindness more than all the burdens and inconveniencies of their poverty, and wished he had never been born, rather than be born to such an uncomfortable life. Those who are ashamed of their children, or any of their relations because of their bodily infirmities, may take a reproof from *these* parents, who freely owned, this is *our son* though he was *born blind*, and lived upon alms.

2. They cautiously *decline* giving any evidence concerning his cure; partly because they were not themselves eye-witnesses of it, and could say nothing to it *of their own knowledge*; and partly because they found it was a *tender point*, and would not bear to be meddled with. And therefore having owned that he was *their son*, and was *born blind*, further these deponents say not.

1. Observe how warily they express themselves; *ver.* 21. *By what means he now sees, we know not, or who has opened his eyes, we know not*, otherwise than by *hear-say*; can give no account, either *by what means*, or *by whose hand* it was done. See how the wisdom of this world teacheth men to *trim* the matter in *critical junctures*. Christ was accused as a *sabbath-breaker*, and as an *impetor*. Now these parents of the blind man, though they were not eye-witnesses of the cure, yet were fully assured of it, and were bound in gratitude to have born their testimony to the honour of the Lord Jesus, who had done their son so great a kindness; but they had not courage to do it, and then thought it might serve to atone for their not appearing in favour of him, that they said nothing to his prejudice; whereas in the day of trial, he that is not *apparently* for Christ, is justly looked upon as *really* against him, *Luke* xi. 23. *Mark* viii. 38.

That they might not be further urged in this matter, they refer themselves and the court to him, *He is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself*. This implies, that while children are not

of age (while they are *infantes*, such as cannot speak) it is incumbent upon their parents to *speak for them*, speak to God for them in prayer, speak to the church for them in baptism; but when they are of age, it is fit they should be asked whether they be willing to stand to that which their parents did for them; and let them speak for themselves. This man though he was *born blind*, yet seems to have been of *quick understanding* above many; which enabled him to speak for himself, better than his friends could speak for him; thus God often by a kind providence makes up in the mind what is wanting in the body; *1 Cor.* xii. 23; 24. His parents turning them over to him; was only to save themselves from trouble, and expose him; whereas they that had so great an interest in his *mercies*, had reason to embark with him in his *hazards* for the honour of that Jesus who had done so much for them.

2. See the reason why they were so cautious, *ver.* 22; 23. *Because they feared the Jews*. It was not because they would put an honour upon their son by making him his own advocate, or because they would have the matter cleared by the *best hand*; but because they would shift trouble off from themselves, as most people are in care to do, no matter on whom they *throw it*. Near is my friend, and near is my child; and perhaps near is my religion, but nearer is *my self*. *Proximus egomet mihi*. But Christianity teacheth another lesson; *1 Cor.* x. 24. *Eph.* viii. 6.

Here is, 1. The *late law* which the Sanhedrin had made. It was *agreed*, and enacted by their authority, That if any man within their jurisdiction did *confess* that Jesus was *Christ*, he should be put out of the synagogue. Observe,

1. The *crime* designed to be punished, and so prevented by this statute, and that was embracing Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah; and discovering this by any *overt-act*, which amounted to a confessing of him. They themselves did expect a Messiah, but they could by no means bear to think that this Jesus should be *he*; nor admit the question whether he were or no, for two reasons. (1.) Because his *precepts* were so contrary to their *traditional laws*. The *spiritual* worship he prescribed, overthrew their formalities; nor did any thing more effectually destroy their singularity and narrow-spiritedness, than that universal charity which he taught; humility and mortification, repentance and self-denial, were lessons new to them, and sounded harsh and strange in their ears. (2.) Because his *promises* and *appearances* were so contrary to their *traditional hopes*. They expected a Messiah in outward pomp and splendor, that should not only free the nation from the Roman yoke, but advance the grandeur of the Sanhedrin, and make all the members of it princes and peers: And now to hear of a Messiah, whose outward circumstances were all mean and poor; whose first appearance, and principal residence was in Galilee, a despised province; who never made his court to them, nor sought their favour; whose followers were neither sword-men, nor gown-men, nor any men of honour, but contemptible fishermen; who proposed, and promised no other redemption but from sin, no other consolation of Israel but what is *spiritual* and *divine*, and at the same time bid his followers expect the cross, and count upon persecution. This was such a reproach to all the ideas they had formed, and filled the minds of their people with, such a blow to their power and interest, and such a disappointment to all their hopes, that they could never be reconciled to it, nor so much as give it a fair or patient hearing, but right or wrong it must be *crushed*.

2. The penalty to be inflicted for this crime. If any should own himself a disciple of Jesus, he should be *deemed*, and *taken* as an apostate from the faith of the Jewish church, and a rebel and traitor against the government of it, and should therefore be *put out of the synagogue*, as one that had rendered himself unworthy of the honours, and incapable of the privileges of their church; he should be excommunicated, and expelled the commonwealth of Israel. Nor was this merely an ecclesiastical censure, which a man that made no conscience of their authority might slight, but it was in effect an *out-lawry*, which excluded a man from civil commerce, and deprived him of his liberty and property. Note, 1. Christ's holy religion, from its first rise, has been opposed, by penal laws made against the professors of it; as if mens consciences would otherwise *naturally* embrace it, this unnatural force has been put upon them. 2. The church's artillery, when the command of it has fallen into ill hands, has often been turned against itself, and *ecclesiastical* censures made to serve a carnal, secular interest. It is no new thing to see those cast out of the synagogue that were the greatest beauties and blessings of it, and to hear those that expelled them, say, *The Lord be glorified*, *Isa.* lxvi. 5.

Now of this edict it is said, (1.) That the Jews had *agreed* it, or *conspired* it. Their consultation and communion herein, was a perfect conspiracy against the crown and dignity of the Redeemer, against the Lord and his anointed. (2.) That they had *already* agreed it. Though he had been but a few months in any publick character among them, and one would think in so short a time could not have made them jealous of him, yet thus *early* were they aware of his growing interest, and *already* agreed to do their utmost to suppress it. He had *late*ly made



his escape out of the temple, and when they saw themselves baffled in their attempts to take him, they *presently* took this course, to make it *penal* for any body to own him. Thus *unanimous*, and thus *expeditious* are the enemies of the church, and their counsels; but he that *sits in heaven laughs at them*, and *has them in derision*, and so may we.

2. The influence which this law had upon the parents of the blind man. They declined saying any thing of Christ, and shuffled it off to their son, *because they feared the Jews*. Christ had incurred the frowns of the government to do their son a kindness, but they would not incur them to do him any honour. Note, *The fear of man brings a snare*, Prov. xxix. 25. and oft makes people deny and disown Christ, and his truths, and ways, and act against their consciences. Well, the parents have thus disentangled themselves, and are discharged from any further attendance; let us now go on with the examination of the *man himself*; their doubt whether he was *born blind* was put out of doubt by them, and therefore,

(2.) They enquired of him concerning the *manner of the cure*, and made their remarks upon it, ver. 15, 16.

1. The same question which his neighbours had put to him, *now again the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight*? This they enquired, not with any sincere desire to *find out the truth*, by tracing the report to the original, but with a desire to *find an occasion* against Christ; for if the man should relate the matter fully, they would prove Christ a sabbath-breaker; if he should vary from his former story, they would have some colour to suspect the whole to be a collusion.

2. The same answer, in effect, which he had before given to his neighbours, he here repeats to the Pharisees, *He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see*. He doth not here speak of the *making* of the clay, for indeed he had not *seen it made*: That circumstance was not essential, and might give the Pharisees most occasion against him, and therefore he waves it. In the former account, he said, *I washed and received sight*; but lest they should think it was only a glimpse for the present, which a heated imagination might fancy itself to have, he now saith, *I do see*: It is a complete and lasting cure.

3. The remarks made upon this story were very different, and occasioned a debate in the court, ver. 16.

1. Some took this occasion to censure and condemn Christ for what he had done. Some of the Pharisees said, *This man is not of God*, as he pretends, *because he keepeth not the sabbath-day*.

1. The doctrine upon which this censure is grounded, is very true, That those *are not of God*; those pretenders to prophecy not *sent of God*; those pretenders to sainthood not *born of God*, who do not *keep the sabbath-day*. They that are of God will *keep the commandments of God*; and this is his commandment, that we sanctify the sabbath: They that are of God *keep up communion* with God, and delight to hear from him, and speak to him; and therefore will observe the sabbath, which is a day appointed for intercourse with heaven. The sabbath is called a *sign*, for the sanctifying it is a sign of a sanctified heart; and the profaning of it a sign of a profane heart. But, 2. The application of it to our Saviour, is very *unjust*, for he did religiously observe the sabbath-day, and never, in any instance, violated it; never did otherwise than *well* on the sabbath-day. He did not keep the sabbath according to the tradition of the elders, and the superstitious observances of the Pharisees, but he kept it according to the command of God, and therefore no doubt he was of God, and his miracles proved him to be *Lord also of the sabbath-day*. Note, Much unrighteous and uncharitable judging is occasioned by mens making the rules of religion more strict than God has made them, and adding their own fancies to God's appointments; as the Jews here, in the case of sabbath-sanctification. We ourselves may forbear such and such things on the sabbath-day, as we find a distraction to us, and we do well, but we must not therefore tie up others to the same strictness: Every thing that we take for a rule of practice, must not presently be made a rule of judgment.

2. Others spoke in his favour, and very pertinently urged, *How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles*? It seems even in this council of the ungodly, there were some that were capable of a *free thought*, and were witnesses for Christ, even in the midst of his enemies. The matter of fact was plain, that this was a true miracle, the more it was *searched into*, the more it was *cleared*; and this brought his former like words to mind, and gave occasion to speak magnificently of them, *τοιαῦτα σημεῖα*, so great signs, so many, so evident. And the inference from it is very natural; such things as these could never be done by a *man that is a sinner*, i. e. not by any mere man, in his own name, and by his own power; or rather, not by one that is a cheat, or an impostor, and in that sense a sinner; such a one may indeed shew some signs and lying wonders, but not such signs and true wonders as Christ wrought. How could a man produce such divine credentials, if he had not a divine commission? Thus there was a *division among them*, a *schism*, so the word is; they clashed in their opinion, a warm debate arose, and the house divided upon it. Thus God *defeats* the counsels of his enemies, by dividing them; and by such testimonies as these given against the malice of persecutors, and the rubs they meet with, their designs against the church are sometimes rendered ineffectual, and always inexcusable.

2. After their enquiry concerning the cure, we must observe their enquiry concerning the *author* of it. And here observe,

1. What the man said of him in answer to their enquiry. They ask him, ver. 17. *What sayest thou of him, seeing that he has opened thine eyes*? What dost thou think of his doing this? And what idea hast thou of him that did it? If he should speak *slightly* of Christ in answer to this, as he might be tempted to do to please them, now he was in their hands, as his parents had done; if he should say, I know not what to make of him, he may be a conjurer for ought I know, or some mountebank, they would have triumphed in it: Nothing confirms Christ's enemies in their enmity to him, so much as the slights put upon him by those that have passed for his friends. But if he should speak *honourably* of him, they would prosecute him upon their new law, which did not except, no, not his own patient; would make him an example, and so deter others from applying themselves to him for cures, which, though they came cheap from Christ, yet would make them pay dear for. Or, perhaps, Christ's friends proposed to have the man's own sentiments concerning his physician, and were willing to know, since he appeared to be a *sensible* man, what he thought of him. Note, Those whose eyes Christ has opened, know best what to say of him, and have great reason, upon all occasions, to *say well* of him. What think we of Christ?

To this question the poor man makes a short, plain, and direct answer, *he is a prophet*, he is one inspired and sent of God to preach and work miracles, and delivers to the world a divine message. There had been no prophets among the Jews of three hundred years passed, yet they did not conclude they should have no more, for they knew he was yet to come who should *seal up vision and prophecy*, Dan. ix. 24. It should seem this man had not any thoughts that he was the Messiah, the great prophet, but one of the same rank with the other prophets: The woman of Samaria concluded he was a *prophet*, before she had any thought of his being the Messiah, John iv. 19. so this blind man thought well of Christ according to the light he had, though he did not think *well enough* of him; but being faithful in what he had already attained to, God revealed even *that* unto him. This poor blind beggar had a clearer judgment of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and saw further into the proofs of a divine mission, than the *masters in Israel* that assumed an authority to judge of prophets.

2. What they said of him in reply to the man's testimony. Having in vain attempted to invalidate the evidence of the fact, and finding that indeed a *notable miracle was wrought*, and they *could not deny it*; they renew their attempt to banter it, and run it down, and do all they can to shake the good opinion the man had of him that opened his eyes; and to convince him that he was an ill man, ver. 24. *Give God the glory, we know that this man is a sinner*. Two ways this is understood, either,

(1.) By way of *advice*, to take heed of ascribing the praise of his cure to a sinful man, but to give it all to God, to whom it was due; thus under colour of zeal for the honour of God, they rob Christ of his honour, as those do who will not worship Christ as God, under pretence of zeal for this great truth, that there is but one God to be worshipped; whereas this is his declared will, that all men should *honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*; and in confessing that Christ is Lord, we *give glory to God the Father*. When God makes use of men that are sinners as instruments of good to us, we must *give God the glory*, for every creature is that to us that he makes it to be, and yet there is a gratitude owing to the instruments. It was a good word, *give God the praise*, but here was ill used; and there seems to be this further in it, this man is a *sinner*, an *ill man*, and therefore give the praise so much the more to God who could work by such an instrument.

(2.) Or by way of *adjuration*, so some take it. We know (though thou dost not, who hast but lately come as it were into a new world) that this man is a *sinner*, i. e. a great impostor that cheats the country, this we are sure of, therefore *give God praise* (as Joshua said to Achan) by making an ingenuous confession of the fraud, and collusion which we are confident there is in this matter; in God's name, man, tell the truth. Thus is God's name abused in papal inquisitions, when by oaths *ex officio*, they extort accusations of *themselves* from the *innocent*, and of *others* from the *ignorant*. See how basely they speak of the Lord Jesus, *we know that this man is a sinner*, is a man of sin: In which we may observe, (1.) Their insolence and pride. They would not have it thought when they asked the man what he thought of him, that they needed information; nay, they *know very well* that he is a sinner, and no body can convince them of the contrary. He had challenged them to their faces, chap. viii. 46. to *convince him of sin*, and they had nothing to say; but now behind his back they speak of him as a malefactor, convicted upon the notorious evidence of the fact. Thus false accusers make up in confidence what is wanting in proof. (2.) The injury and indignity hereby done to the Lord Jesus. When he became man he not only took upon him the form of a *servant*, but of a *sinner*, Rom. viii. 3. and passed for a sinner in common with the rest of mankind. Nay, he was represented as a sinner of the first magnitude, a sinner above all men; and being *made sin for us* he despised even *this* shame.



3. The debate that arose between the Pharisees and this poor man concerning Christ: They say, *he is a sinner*; he saith, *he is a prophet*. As it is an encouragement to those who are concerned for the cause of Christ, to hope that it shall never be lost for want of witnesses, when they find a poor blind beggar picked up from the way-side, and made a witness for Christ, to the faces of his most impudent enemies; so it is an encouragement to those who are called out to witness for Christ, to find with what prudence and courage this man manageth his defence, according to the promise, *it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak*. Though he had never seen Jesus, he had felt his grace.

Now in the parley between the Pharisees and this poor man we may observe three steps.

First, He sticks to the certain matter of fact, which they endeavour to shake the evidence of. That which is doubtful, is best resolved into that which is plain, and therefore, 1. He adheres to that which to himself at least, and to his own satisfaction, was past dispute, *ver. 25. Whether he be a sinner or no I know not*, I will not now stand to dispute, nor need I, the matter is plain, and though I should altogether hold my peace, would speak for it self; or, as it might better be rendered, *if he be a sinner, I know it not*, I see no reason to say so, but the contrary, for this *one thing I know*, and can be more sure of than you can be of that which you are so confident of, *that whereas I was blind, now I see*, and therefore must not only say, that he has been a good friend to me, but that he is a prophet; I am both able and bound to speak well of him. Now here, (1.) He tacitly reproves their great assurance of the ill character they gave of the blessed Jesus. You say you *know* him to be a sinner, I that know him as well as you do, cannot give him any such character. (2.) He boldly relies upon his own experience of the power and goodness of the holy Jesus, and resolves to abide by it. There is no disputing against experience, nor arguing a man out of his senses; here is one that is properly an eye-witness of the power and grace of Christ, though he had never seen him. Note, As Christ's mercies are most valued by those that have felt the want of them, that have been blind, and now see, so the most powerful and durable affections to Christ are those that arise from an experimental knowledge of him, 1 John i. 1. Acts iv. 2.

He doth not here give a nice account of the method of the cure, nor pretend to describe it *philosophically*, but in short, *whereas I was blind, now I see*. Thus in the work of grace in the soul, though we cannot tell when and how, by what instruments, and by what steps and advances the blessed change was wrought, yet we may take the comfort of it, if we can say, through grace, *whereas I was blind, now I see*. I did live a carnal, worldly, sensual life, but thanks be to God it is now otherwise with me, Eph. v. 8.

2. They endeavour to baffle and stifle the evidence by a needless repetition of their enquiries into it. *Ver. 26. What did he do to thee? How opened he thine eyes?* They asked these questions, (1.) Because they wanted something to say, and would rather speak *impertinently*, than seem to be silenced, or run a-ground. Thus eager disputants that resolve they will have the last word by such vain repetitions, to avoid the shame of being silenced, make themselves accountable for many idle words. (2.) Because they hoped by putting the man upon repeating his evidence, to catch him *tripping* in it, or *wavering*, and then they would think they had gained a good point.

Secondly, He *upbraids* them with their obstinate infidelity, and invincible prejudices, and they *revile* him as a disciple of Jesus, *ver. 27-29*. where the man is more bold with them, and they more sharp upon him than before.

1. The man boldly upbraids them with their wilful and unreasonable opposition of the evidence of this miracle, *ver. 27*. He would not gratify them with a repetition of the story, but bravely replied, *I have told you already, and ye did not hear, wherefore would you hear it again, will ye also be his disciples?* Some think he spoke *seriously*, and really expecting that they would be convinced. He has many disciples, I will be one, will you also come in among them? Some zealous young Christians see so much reason for religion, that they are ready to think every one should presently be of their mind. But it rather seems to be spoken *ironically*, *will you be his disciples?* No, I know you abhor the thoughts of it, why then should you desire to hear that which will either make you his disciples, or leave you inexcusable if you be not. Those that wilfully shut their eyes against the light, as these Pharisees here did, (1.) They *make themselves contemptible* and base, as these here did, who were justly *exposed* by this poor man for denying the conclusion, when they had nothing to object against either of the premises. (2.) They forfeit all the benefit of further instructions and means of knowledge, and conviction: They that have been told once and *would not hear*, why should they be told it again? *Jer. li. 9. see Matt. x. 14.* (3.) They hereby *receive the grace of God in vain*. This is implied in that, *will ye be his disciples?* No, you resolve you will not, why then would you hear it again? Only that you may be his accusers and persecutors? Those who will not see cause to embrace Christ, and

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join with his followers, yet one, would think, should see cause enough not to hate, and persecute him and them.

2. For this they scorn and *revile* him, *ver. 28*. when they could not resist the wisdom and spirit, by which he spoke, they broke out into a passion, and scolded him, began to call names, and give him ill language. See what Christ's faithful witnesses must expect from the adversaries of his truth and cause; let them count upon *all manner of evil* to be said of them, *Matt. v. 11*. It is the method commonly taken by unreasonable man, what is wanting in truth and reason, to make it out with railing.

1. They taunted this man for his affection to Christ; they said, *thou art his disciple*, as if that were reproach enough, and they could not say worse of him. We scorn to be his disciples, and will leave that preferment to thee, and such scoundrels as thou art. They do what they can to put Christ's religion in an ill name, and to represent the profession of it as a contemptible, scandalous character. They *reviled* him. The vulgar reads it, *Maledixerunt eum*, they *curled* him; and what was their curse? It was this, *be thou his disciple*; may such a curse (saith St. Austin here) ever be on us and on our children! If we take our measures of credit and disgrace from the sentiment or clamours rather of a blind deluded world, we shall *glory in our shame*, and be *ashamed of our glory*. They had no reason to call this man a *disciple* of Christ, he had neither seen him or heard him preach, only he had spoken favourably of a kindness he had done him, and this they could not bear.

2. They gloried in their relation to Moses as their master; *we are Moses's disciples*, and do not either need or desire any other teacher. Note, 1. Carnal professors of religion are very apt to trust to, and be proud of the dignities and privileges of their profession, while they are strangers to the principles and powers of their religion. These Pharisees had before boasted of their good parentage, *we are Abraham's seed*; here of their good education, *we are Moses's disciples*, as if these would save them. 2. It is said to see how much one part of religion is opposed under colour of zeal for another part; there was a perfect harmony between Christ and Moses; Moses prepared for Christ, and Christ perfected Moses, so that they might be disciples of Moses, and become the disciples of Christ too; and yet they here put them in opposition, nor could they have persecuted Christ, but under the umbrage of the abused name of Moses. Thus they, who gainstly the doctrine of free grace, value themselves as promoters of man's duty, we are Moses's disciples; while, on the other hand, they that cancel the obligation of the law, value themselves as the assertors of free grace, and as if none were the *disciples* of Jesus but they, whereas if we rightly understand the matter, we shall see God's grace, and man's duty meet together, and kiss and befriend each other.

3. They gave some sort of reason for their adhering to Moses against Christ, *ver. 2. We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not whence he is*. But did they not know, that among other things God spake unto Moses, this was one, that they must expect *another prophet*, and a further revelation of the mind of God; yet when our Lord Jesus, pursuant to what God said to Moses, did appear, and gave sufficient proofs of his being *that prophet*, under pretence of sticking to the old religion, and the established church, they not only forfeited, but forsook their own mercies. In this argument of theirs observe,

1. How impertinently they alledge in defence of their enmity to Christ, that which none of his followers ever denied, *we know that God spake unto Moses*, and thanks be to God we know it too, more plainly to Moses than to any other of the prophets; but what then? God spake to Moses, and doth it therefore follow that Jesus is an impostor? Moses was a prophet, it is true, and might not Jesus be a prophet too? Moses spake honourably of Jesus, *John v. 46.* and Jesus spake honourably of Moses, *Luke vi. 29.* they were both faithful in the same house of God, Moses as a servant, Christ as a son; therefore their pleading Moses's divine warrant in opposition to Christ's, was an artifice to make unthinking people believe it was as certain that Jesus was a false prophet, as that Moses was a true one; whereas they were both true.

2. How absurdly they urge their *ignorance* of Christ, as a reason to justify their contempt of him. *As for this fellow*. Thus scornfully do they speak of the blessed Jesus, as if they did not think it worth while to charge their memories with a name so inconsiderable; they express themselves with as much disdain of the shepherd of Israel, as if he had not been worthy to be *set with the dogs of their flock*; as for *this fellow*, this sorry fellow, *we know not whence he is*. They looked upon themselves to have the key of knowledge, that none must preach without a licence first had and obtained from them, under the seal of their court; they expected that all who set up for teachers, should apply themselves to them, and give them satisfaction, which this Jesus had never done, never so far owned their power as to ask their leave, and therefore they concluded him an intruder, and one that came not in by the door; *they knew not whence* or what *he was*, and therefore conclude him a *sinner*, whereas



those we know little of, we should judge charitably of; but proud and narrow souls will think none good but themselves, and those that are in their interest. It was not long ago, that the Jews had made the contrary to this, an objection against Christ, *chap. vii. 27. We know this man whence he is, but when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is.* Thus they could with the greatest assurance, either affirm, or deny the same thing, according as they saw it would serve their turn. They *knew not whence he was*, and whose fault was that? (1.) It is certain *they ought to have enquired*; the Messiah was to appear about this time, and it concerned them to look about them, and examine every indication; but these priests like those, *Jer. ii. 5. said not, where is the Lord?* (2.) It is certain *they might have known* whence he was, might have known not only by searching the register, that he was born in Bethlehem; but by enquiring into his doctrine, miracles and conversation, they might have known that he was sent of God, and had better orders, a better commission, and far better instructions than any they could give him. See the absurdity of infidelity, men will not know the doctrine of Christ, because they are resolved they will not believe it, and then pretend they do not believe it, because they do not know it. Such ignorance and unbelief, which support one another, aggravate one another.

Thirdly, He *reasons with them* concerning this matter, and they *excommunicate him*.

1. The poor man finding that he had reason on his side, which they could not answer, grows more bold, and, in prosecution of his argument, is very close upon them.

(1.) He *admires* their obstinate infidelity, *ver. 30.* not at all daunted by their frowns, nor shaken by their confidence, he bravely answered, why, *herein is a marvellous thing*, the strangest instance of wilful ignorance that ever was heard of among men that pretended to sense, that *you no not from whence he is*, and yet he has opened mine eyes. Two things he wonders at.

(1.) That they should be *strangers* to a man so famous. He that could open the eyes of the blind, must certainly be a considerable man; and worth taking notice of; the Pharisees were inquisitive men, had a large correspondence and acquaintance, thought themselves the eyes of the church, and its watchmen, and yet that they should talk, as if they thought it below them to take cognizance of such a man as this, and have conversation with him, this is *a strange thing indeed*. There are many who pass for learned and knowing men, that understand business, and can talk sense in other things, that yet are ignorant to a wonder of the doctrine of Christ, that have no concern, no not so much as a curiosity to acquaint themselves with that which the *angels desire to look into*.

(2.) That they should question the *divine mission* of one that had undoubtedly wrought a *divine miracle*. When they said, *we know not whence he is*, they meant, we know not any proof that his doctrine and ministry is from heaven; now this is strange (saith the poor man) that the miracle wrought upon me has not convinced you, and put the matter out of doubt. That you whose education and studies give you advantages, above others, of discerning the things of God, that you should thus shut your eyes against the light. It is a *marvellous work, and a wonder, when the wisdom of the wise thus perisheth*, *Isa. xxix. 14.* that they deny the truth of that which they cannot gainsay the evidence of. Note, 1. The unbelief of those who enjoy the means of knowledge and conviction, is indeed a *marvellous thing*, *Mark vi. 6.* 2. Those who have themselves experienced the power and grace of the Lord Jesus, do especially wonder at the wilfulness of those that reject him, and having such good thoughts of him themselves, are amazed that others have not so too. Had Christ opened the eyes of these Pharisees, they would not have doubted his being a prophet.

(2.) He argues strongly against them, *ver. 31, 32, 33.* They had determined concerning Jesus, that he was not of God, *ver. 16.* but was a *sinner*, *ver. 24.* In answer to which, the man here proves not only that he was *not a sinner*, *ver. 31.* but that he was *of God*, *ver. 33.* He argues here, (1.) With great *knowledge*. Though he could not read a letter on the book, he was well acquainted with the scripture, and the things of God; had wanted the sense of seeing, yet had well improved that of hearing, by which *faith cometh*; yet that would not have served him, if he had not had an extraordinarily presence of God with him, and special aids of his Spirit upon this occasion. (2.) With great *zeal* for the honour of Christ, whom he could not endure to hear run down, and evil spoken of. (3.) With great *boldness* and *courage*, and undauntedness, not terrified by the proudest of his adversaries. They that are ambitious of the favours of God, must not be afraid of the frowns of men. "See here (saith Dr. Whitby) a blind man and unlearned, judging more rightly of divine things, than the whole learned council of the Pharisees. Whence we learn, that we are not always to be led by the authority of councils, popes, or bishops; and that it is not absurd for lay-men, sometimes, to vary from their opinions; these overseers being sometimes guilty of great oversights."

Now the man's argument may be reduced into form, somewhat like that of David, *Psal. lxvi. 18, 19.* The proposition in David's argument, is, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will*

*not hear me*; here it is to the same purpose, *God heareth not sinners*; the assumption there is, *But verily God hath heard me*; here it is, *Verily God hath heard Jesus*, he has been honoured with the doing of that which was never done before; the conclusion there is to the honour of God, *blessed be God*; here to the honour of the Lord Jesus, *He is of God*.

1. He lays it down for an *undoubted truth*, that none but good men are the *favourites* of heaven, *ver. 31.* Now we know, you know it as well as I, that *God heareth not sinners*, but *if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth*. Here,

1. The assertions rightly understood are true.

(1.) Be it spoken to the terror of the wicked, *God heareth not sinners*, i. e. such sinners as the Pharisees meant, when they said of Christ, *he is a sinner*, one, that, under the umbrage of God's name, advanced the devil's interest. This speaks no discouragement to repenting returning sinners, but to those that go on still in their trespasses, that make their prayers not only consistent with, but subservient to, their sins, as the hypocrites do, God will not *hear* them; he will not own them, nor give an answer of peace to their prayers.

(2.) Be it spoken to the comfort of the righteous, that *if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth*. Here is, 1. The complete character of a good man, he is one that *worships God, and doth his will*, he is constant in his devotions at set times, and regular in his conversation at all times. He is one that makes it his business to glorify his Creator, by the solemn adorations of his name, and a sincere obedience to his will and law; both must go together. 2. The unspeakable comfort of such a man, *him God hears*; hears his complaints, and relieves him; hears his appeals, and rights him; hears his praises, and accepts them; hears his prayers, and answers them, *Psal. xxxiv. 15.*

2. The application of these truths is very pertinent to prove that he, at whose word such a divine power was put forth, as cured one born blind, was not an ill man, but having manifestly such an interest in the holy God, as that he *heard him always*, *John xi. 41, 42.* was certainly a holy one.

2. He magnifies the miracles which Christ had wrought to strengthen the argument the more, *ver. 32.* *Since the world began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.* This is to shew either, (1.) That it was a *true* miracle, and above the power of nature; it was never heard, that any man, by the use of natural means, had cured one that was *born blind*; no doubt, but this man and his parents had been very inquisitive into cases of this nature, whether any such had been helped, and could hear of none, which enabled him to speak this with the more assurance. Or, (2.) That it was an *extraordinary* miracle, and beyond the precedents of former miracles, neither Moses nor any of the prophets, though they did great things, ever did such things as this; wherein divine power, and divine goodness seem to strive which should outshine. Moses wrought miraculous plagues, but Christ wrought miraculous cures. Note, 1. The wondrous works of the Lord Jesus were such, as the like had never been done before. 2. It becomes those who have received mercy from God, to magnify the mercies they have received, and to speak honourably of them; not that thereby glory may redound to themselves, and they may seem to be extraordinary favourites of heaven, but that God may have so much the more glory.

3. He therefore concludes, *If this man were not of God, he could do nothing*, i. e. nothing extraordinary, no such thing as *this*, and therefore no doubt he is *of God*, notwithstanding his non-conformity to your traditions in the business of the sabbath-day. Note, What Christ did on earth, sufficiently demonstrated what he was in heaven, for if he had not been sent of God, he could not have wrought such miracles. It is true, the man of sin comes with *lying wonders*, but not with real miracles. It is likewise supposed, that a false prophet might, by divine permission, give a *sign or a wonder*, *Deut. xiii. 1, 2.* yet the case is so put, as that it would carry with it its own confutation, for it is to enforce a temptation to serve other gods, which was to set God *against himself*. It is true likewise, that many wicked people have in Christ's name done many wonderful works, which doth not prove them that wrought them to be of God, but him in whose name they were wrought. We may each of us know by this, whether we are of God or no? *What do we?* What do we for God, for our souls, in working out our salvation; what do we more than others?

2. The Pharisees finding themselves unable either to answer his reasonings, or to bear them, fell foul upon him, and with a great deal of pride and passion they broke off the discourse, *ver. 34.* where we are told,

1. What they *said*; having nothing to reply to his argument, they reflected upon his person, *Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?* They take that *heinously*, which they had reason to take *kindly*, and are cut to the heart with rage, by that which should have pricked them to the heart with repentance.

Observe, 1. How they despised him, and what a severe censure they passed upon him; thou wast not only *born in sin*, as every man is, but altogether so, wholly corrupt, and bearing about with thee in thy body as well as in thy soul, the marks of that



that corruption; thou wast one, whom nature *stigmatized*. Had he still continued blind, it had been barbarous to upbraid him with it, and from thence to gather that he was more deeply tainted with sin than other people; but most unjust to take notice of it, now the cure had not only rolled away the reproach of his blindness, but had *signalized* him as a favourite of heaven. Some take it thus, thou hast been a *common beggar*, and such are too often *common sinners*, and thou hast, no doubt, been as bad as any of them; whereas by his discourse he had proved the contrary, and had evidenced a deep tincture of piety. But when proud imperious Pharisees resolve to run a man down, any thing shall serve for a pretence.

2. How they *disdain* to learn of him, or to receive instruction from him. *Dost thou teach us?* A mighty emphasis must be laid here upon *thou*, and *us*. What? wilt thou, a silly sorry fellow, ignorant and illiterate, that hast not seen the light of the sun a day to an end, a beggar by the way-side, of the very dregs and refuse of the town, wilt thou pretend to teach *us*, that are the sages of the law, and grandees of the church, that sit in Moses's chair, and are masters in Israel? Note, Proud men scorn to be taught, especially by their inferiors, whereas we should never think ourselves too old, or too wise, or too good, to learn. Those that have much wealth, would have more, and why not those that have much knowledge? And those are to be valued by whom we may improve in learning. What a poor excuse was this for the Pharisees' infidelity, that it would be a disparagement to them to be instructed, and informed, and convinced, by such a silly fellow as this.

2. What they did. They *cast him out*. Some understand it only of a rude and scornful dismissal of him from their council-board; they turned him out of the room by head and shoulders, and perhaps ordered their servants to kick him; they thought it was time to send him far enough, that came so near their consciences; but it seems rather to be a judicial act, they excommunicated him, it is likely, with the highest degree of excommunication, they cut him off from being a member of the church of Israel. This poor man (saith Dr. Lightfoot) was the first confessor, as John Baptist was the first martyr of the Christian church. There was a law made, that if any confessed Jesus to be the Christ, he should be *cast out of the synagogue*, ver. 22. But this man had only said of Jesus, that he was a prophet, was of God, and yet they stretch the law to bring him under the lash of it, as if he had confessed him to be the Christ. To be justly excommunicated and cast out of a pure church, *clave non errante*, is a very dreadful thing, for what is so bound on earth, is bound in heaven; but to be cast out of a corrupt church, which it is our duty to go out of, and that unjustly, though cast out with an *anathema*, and all the bug-bear ceremonies of bell, book, and candle, is what we have no reason at all to dread, or be aggrieved at; *The curse causeless shall not come*. If they cast Christ's followers out of their synagogues, as he foretels, *John* xvi. 2. there is no harm done when they are become *synagogues of Satan*.

35. Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he found him, he said unto him, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* 36. He answered and said, *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* 37. And Jesus said unto him, *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.* 38. And he said, *Lord, I believe.* And he worshipped him.

In these verses we may observe,

First, The tender care which our Lord Jesus took of this poor man, ver. 35. *When Jesus heard that they had cast him out*, for it is likely the town rang of it, and every body cried out shame upon them for it, then he *found him*, which implies his *seeking* him, and looking after him, that he might encourage and comfort him. (1.) Because he had, to the best of his knowledge, spoken so very well, so bravely, so boldly, in defence of the Lord Jesus. Note, Jesus Christ will be sure to stand by his witnesses, and own those that own him, and his truth, and ways. Earthly princes neither do nor can take cognizance of all that vindicate them and their government, and administration; but our Lord Jesus knows and observes all the faithful testimonies we bear to him at any time, and a book of remembrance is written, and it shall redound not only to our credit hereafter, but our comfort now. (2.) Because the Pharisees had cast him out, and abused him. Besides the common regard which the righteous Judge of the world has to those who suffer wrongfully, *Psal.* ciii. 6. there is a particular notice taken of those that suffer in the cause of Christ, and for the testimony of a good conscience. Here was one poor man suffering for Christ, and he took care, that as his *afflictions abounded*, his *consolations* should *much more abound*. Note, 1. Though persecutors may exclude good men from their communion, yet they cannot exclude them from communion with Christ, nor put them out of the way of his visits. Happy they who have a friend that men cannot debar them from! 2. Jesus Christ will graciously find and take up those who for his sake are unjustly rejected and cast out by men. He will be a hiding place to his outcasts, and *appear to the joy* of those whom their brethren *hated and cast out*.

Secondly, The comfortable converse Christ had with him, wherein he brings him acquainted with the consolation of Israel. He had well improved the knowledge he had; and now Christ gives him further instruction, for he that is faithful in a little, shall be intrusted with more, *Matth.* xiii. 12.

1. Our Lord Jesus examines his faith. *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* *Dost thou give credit to the promises of the Messiah?* *Dost thou expect his coming, and art thou ready to receive and embrace him when he is manifested to thee?* This was that faith of the Son of God which they lived by, who lived before his manifestation. Observe, (1.) The Messiah is here called the *Son of God*, and so the Jews had learned to call him from the prophecies, *Psal.* ii. 7. — *lxxxix.* 27. see *John* i. 49. *Thou art the Son of God*, i. e. the true Messiah. They that expected the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, delighted rather in calling him the *Son of David*, which gave more countenance to that expectation, *Matth.* xxii. 42. But Christ, that he might give us an idea of his kingdom, as purely spiritual and divine, calls himself the *Son of God*, and rather *Son of man* in general, than of David in particular. (2.) The desires and expectations of the Messiah, which the Old Testament saints had, guided by, and grounded upon, the promise, were graciously interpreted and accepted as their believing on *the Son of God*. This faith Christ here enquires after, *Dost thou believe?* Note, The great thing which is now required of us, (1 *John* iii. 23.) and will shortly be enquired after concerning us, is our *believing on the Son of God*, and by this we must stand or fall for ever.

2. The poor man solicitously enquires concerning the Messiah he was to believe in, professing his readiness to embrace him, and close with him, ver. 36. *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him?* (1.) Some think he did know that Jesus, who cured him, was the Son of God, but did not know which was Jesus, and therefore supposing this that talked with him to be a follower of Jesus, desired him to do him the favour to direct him to him; not that he might satisfy his curiosity with the sight of him, but that he might the more firmly believe in him, and profess his faith, and *know whom he had believed*. See *Cant.* v. 6, 7. — *iii.* 2, 3. It is Christ only that can direct us to himself. (2.) Others think he did know that this person who talked with him was Jesus, the same that cured him, whom he believed a great and good man, and a prophet, but did not yet know that he was, or was to be, the Son of God, and the true Messiah. Lord, I believe there is a Christ to come, thou who hast given me bodily sight, tell me, O tell me, who and where this Son of God is. Christ's question intimated that the Messiah was come, and was now among them, which he presently takes the hint of, and asks, *Where is he, Lord?* The question was rational and just, *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* For how could he believe in one of whom he had not heard? The work of ministers is to tell us *who the Son of God is*, that we may believe on him, *John* xx. 31.

3. Our Lord Jesus graciously reveals himself to him as that Son of God, on whom he must believe, ver. 37. *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.* Thou needest not go far to find out the Son of God, *Behold the word is nigh thee.* We do not find that Christ did thus expressly, and in so many words, reveal himself to any other, as to this man here, and to the woman of Samaria, *I that speak unto thee am he*; he left others to find out by arguments who he was, but to these weak and foolish things of the world he chose to manifest himself, so as not to the *wise and prudent*.

Christ here describes himself to this man by two things, which express his great favour to him.

(1.) *Thou hast seen him*, and he was much indebted to the Lord Jesus for opening his eyes, that he might *see him*. Now he was made sensible more than ever, what an unspeakable mercy it was to be cured of his blindness, that he might see the Son of God, a sight which rejoiced his heart more than that of the *light of this world*. Note, The greatest comfort of bodily eyesight is its serviceableness to our faith, and the interests of our souls. How contentedly might this man have returned to his former blindness, like old Simeon, now his eyes had *seen God's salvation*. If we apply it to the opening of the eyes of the mind, it intimates that spiritual sight is given principally for this end, that we may see Christ, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6. Can we say that by faith we have seen Christ, seen him in his beauty and glory, in his ability and willingness to save, so seen him, as to be satisfied *concerning him*, to be satisfied *in him*? let us give him the praise that opened our eyes.

(2.) It is *he that talketh with thee*, and he was indebted to Christ for condescending to do this. He was not only favoured with a sight of Christ, but was admitted into fellowship and communion with him. Great princes are willing to be seen by those whom yet they will not vouchsafe to *talk with*. But Christ, by his word and Spirit, talks with those whose desires are towards him, and in talking with them, manifests himself to them, as he did to the two disciples, when he talked their hearts warm, *Luke* xxiv. 32. Observe, This poor man was solicitously enquiring after the Saviour, when at the same time he saw him, and was talking with him. Note, Jesus Christ is often-



oftentimes nearer the souls that seek him, than they themselves are aware of. Doubting Christians are sometimes saying, *Where is the Lord?* and fearing, they are cast out from his sight, when at the same time it is he that *talketh with them, and puts strength into them.*

4. The poor man readily entertains this surprizing revelation, and, in a transport of joy and wonder, he said, *Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.*

(1.) He professed his faith in Christ, *Lord, I believe thee to be the Son of God.* He would not dispute any thing that he said who had shewed such mercy to him, and wrought such a miracle for him, nor doubt of the truth of a doctrine, which was confirmed by such signs. Believing with the heart, he thus confesseth with the mouth; and now the bruised reed was become a cedar.

(2.) He paid his homage to him. He *worshipped him*, not only gave him the civil respects due to a great man, and the acknowledgments owing to a kind benefactor, but herein gave him *divine honour*, and worshipped him as the *Son of God* manifested in the flesh. None but God is to be worshipped, so that in worshipping Jesus, he owned him to be God. Note, True faith will shew itself in a humble adoration of the Lord Jesus. They who believe in him, will see all the reason in the world to worship him. We never read any more of this man, but it is very likely from henceforth, he became a constant follower of Christ.

39. ¶ And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world: that they which see not, might see; and that they which see, might be made blind. 40. And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? 41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Christ having spoken comfort to the poor man that was *persecuted*, here speaks conviction to his *persecutors*, a specimen of the distributions of *trouble* and *rest* at the great day, 2 *Thes.* i. 6, 7. Probably this was not immediately after his discourse with the man, but he took the next opportunity that offered itself to have a saying to the Pharisees.

First, Here is the account Christ gives of his design in coming into the world, *ver.* 39. *For judgment I am come to order and administer the great affairs of the kingdom of God among men, and am invested with a judicial power, in order thereunto to be executed in conformity to the wise counsels of God, and in pursuance of them.* What Christ spoke he spoke, not as a preacher in the pulpit, but as a king upon the throne, and a judge upon the bench. His business into the world was *great*, he came to keep the assizes, and general goal-delivery; he came *for judgment*, that is, (1.) To preach a doctrine and law, which would *try* men, and effectually *discover* and *distinguish* them, and would be completely fitted, in all respects, to be the rule of government now, and of judgment shortly. (2.) To put a *difference* between men, by revealing the thoughts of many hearts, and laying open mens true characters by this one test, whether they were *well* or *ill* affected to him. (3.) To change the face of government in his church, to abolish the Jewish oecconomy, to take down that fabric, which though erected for the time by the hand of God himself, yet by tract of time was antiquated, and by the incurable corruptions of the managers of it, was become rotten and dangerous, and to erect a new building by another model, to institute new ordinances and offices, to abrogate Judaism, and enact Christianity, *for this judgment he came into the world*, and it was a great revolution.

This great truth he explains by a metaphor borrowed from the miracle he had lately wrought, *That they which see not, might see, and that they which see, might be made blind.* Such a difference of Christ's coming is often spoken of; to some his gospel is a favour of *life unto life*, to others of *death unto death.*

1. This is applicable to nations, and people, that the Gentiles who had long been destitute of the light of divine revelation, might see it; and the Jews, who had long enjoyed it, might have the things of their peace hid from their eyes, *Hos.* i. 10.—ii. 23. The Gentiles see a great light, while blindness is *happened unto Israel*, and their eyes are *darkened.*

2. To particular persons. Christ came into the world, (1.) *Intentionally* and designedly to give *sight* to them that were spiritually *blind*, by his word to *reveal the object*, and by his Spirit to *heal the organ*, that many precious souls might be turned from *darkness to light.* He came *for judgment*, i. e. to set those at liberty from their dark prison, that were willing to be released, *Isa.* lxi. 1. (2.) *Eventually*, and in the issue, *that those which see, might be made blind*; that those who have a high conceit of their own wisdom, and set that up in contradiction to divine revelation, might be sealed up in ignorance and infidelity. The preaching of the cross was foolishness, and an insatiating thing to them, who by wisdom *knew not God.* Christ came into the world for this judgment, to administer the affairs of a spiritual kingdom seated in mens minds. Whereas in the Jewish church, the blessings and judgments of

God's government were mostly *temporal*, now the method of administration should be changed; and as the good subjects of his kingdom should be blessed with spiritual blessings in heavenly things, such as arise from a due *illumination* of the mind, so the rebels should be punished with spiritual plagues, not war, famine and pestilence as formerly, but such as arise from a *judicial insatiation*, hardness of heart, terror of conscience, strong delusions, vile affections. In this way Christ will *judge between cattle and cattle*, *Ezek.* xxxix. 17.

Secondly, Here is the Pharisees cavil at this. They were *with him*, not desirous to learn any good from him, but to form evil against him, and they said, *Are we blind also?* When Christ said, that *they which see*, should by his coming be made blind, they apprehended that he meant them, who were the *seers* of the people, and valued themselves by their *insight*, and *foresight.* Now, say they, we know that the common people are blind, but *are we blind also?* What, we? The rabbins, the doctors, the learned in the laws, the graduates in the schools, *are we blind too?* This is *scandalum magnatum.* Note, Many times those that need reproof most, and deserve it best, though they have wit enough to discern a *tacit* one, yet have not grace enough to bear a *just* one. These Pharisees took this reproof for a reproach, as those lawyers, *Luke* xi. 45. *Are we blind also?* Darest thou say that we are blind, whose judgment every one has such a veneration for, values and veils to? Note, Nothing fortifies mens corrupt hearts more against the convictions of the word, nor more effectually repels them, than the good opinion, especially if it be a high opinion which others have of them; as if all that had gained applause with men, must needs obtain acceptance with God, than which nothing more false and deceitful, for God sees not as man sees.

Thirdly, Here is Christ's answer to this cavil, which, if it did not *convince* them, yet silenced them. If ye were *blind*, ye should have no sin, but now ye say, *We see, therefore your sin remaineth.* They glorified in it that they were not blind, as the common people, were not so credulous and manageable as they, but would *see with their own eyes*, having abilities, as they thought, sufficient for their own conduct, so that they needed not any body to lead them. This very thing which they gloried in, Christ here tells them was their shame and ruin. For,

1. If ye were *blind*, ye should have no sin. (1.) If you had been really ignorant, your sin had not been so deeply aggravated, nor should ye have had so much sin to answer for, as now you have. If you were blind, as the poor Gentiles are, and many of their own poor subjects, from whom you have taken the key of knowledge, you should have had comparatively *no sin.* The times of ignorance God winked at; invincible ignorance, though it do not justify sin, excuseth it, and lessens the guilt. It will be more tolerable with those that perish for lack of vision, than for those who *rebel against the light.* (2.) If you had been sensible of your own blindness, if when you would see nothing else, you could have seen the need of one to lead you, you would soon have accepted Christ as your guide, and then you would have *had no sin*, you would have submitted to an evangelical righteousness, and have been put into a justified state. Note, Those who are convinced of their disease, are in a fair way to be cured, for there is not a greater hindrance to the salvation of souls, than self-sufficiency.

2. But now ye say, *we see*, now ye have knowledge, and are instructed out of the law, your sin is highly aggravated; and now you have a conceit of that knowledge, and think you see your way better than any body can shew it you, *therefore your sin remains*, your case is desperate, and your disease incurable. As those are most blind who *will not see*, so their blindness is most dangerous who fancy they do see. No patients are so hardly managed as those in a frenzy, who say they are *well*, and nothing ails them. The sin of those that are self-conceited, and self-confident *remains*, for they reject the gospel of grace, and therefore the *guilt* of their sin remains *unpardoned*, and they forfeit the Spirit of grace, and therefore the *power* of their sin remains *unbroken.* Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? Hearest thou the Pharisees say, *We see?* There is more hope of a fool, of a publican and a harlot, than of such.

## C H A P. X.

In this chapter we have, (1.) Christ's parabolical discourse concerning himself, as the door of the sheep, and the shepherd of the sheep, *ver.* 1—18. (2.) The various sentiments of people upon it, *ver.* 19—21. (3.) The dispute Christ had with the Jews in the temple at the feast of dedication, *ver.* 22—39. (4.) His departure into the country thereupon, *ver.* 40—42.

1. **V**ERILY I say unto you, He that entreth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2. But he that entreth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep. 3. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep



sheep follow him : for they know his voice. 5. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him : for they know not the voice of strangers. 6. This parable spake Jesus unto them : but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them. 7. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8. All that ever came before me, are thieves and robbers : but the sheep did not hear them. 9. I am the door : by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy : I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11. I am the good shepherd : the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth : and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father : and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my self : I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

It is not certain whether this discourse was at the *feast of dedication* in the winter, spoken of, *ver. 22.* which may be taken as the date, not only of what follows, but of what goes before, that which countenanceth this, is, that Christ, in his discourse there, carries on the metaphor of the sheep, *ver. 26, 27.* from whence, it seems that that discourse and this were at the same time ; or whether this was a continuation of his parley with the Pharisees, in the close of the foregoing chapter. The Pharisees supported themselves in their opposition to Christ with this principle, that they were the *pastors of the church*, and that Jesus having no commission from them, was an intruder, and an impostor, and therefore the people were bound in duty to stick to *them* against him. In opposition to this, Christ here describes who were the *false* shepherds, and who the *true*, leaving them to infer what they were.

First, Here is the parable, or similitude proposed, *ver. 1, 5.* it is borrowed from the custom of that country, in the management of their sheep. Similitudes used for the illustration of divine truths, should be taken from those things that are most familiar and common, that the things of God be not clouded by that which should clear them. The preface to this discourse is solemn, *Verily, verily I say unto you, Amen, Amen ;* this vehement asseveration speaks the certainty and weight of what he said ; we find *Amen* doubled in the church's praises and prayers, *Psal. xli. 13. — lxxii. 19. — lxxxix. 52.* If we would have our *Amens* accepted in heaven, let Christ's *Amens* be prevailing on earth ; his repeated *Amens*.

In the parable we have,

1. The evidence of a thief and a robber, that comes to do mischief to the flock, and damage to the owner, *ver. 1.* He enters not by the door, as having no lawful cause of entry, but climbs up some other way, at a window, or some breach in the wall. How industrious are wicked people to do mischief ? What plots will they lay ? what pains will they take ? what hazards will they run in their wicked pursuits ? which should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardise in the service of God.

2. The character that distinguisheth the *rightful owner*, who has a propriety in the sheep, and a care of them, he enters in by the door, as one having authority, *ver. 2.* and he comes to do them some good office or other, to bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick, *Ezek. xxxiv. 16.* Sheep need man's care, and, in return for it, are serviceable to man, *1 Cor. ix. 7.* they clothe and feed those by whom they are coted and fed.

3. The ready entrance that the shepherd finds, *ver. 3.* To him the porter openeth. Antiently they had their sheep-folds within the outer gates of their houses, for the greater safety of their flocks, so that none could come to them the right way, but such as the porter opened to, or the master of the house gave the keys to.

4. The care he takes, and the provision he makes for his sheep. The sheep hear his voice, when he speaks familiarly to them, when they came into the fold, as men now do to their dogs and horses, and which is more, he calls his own sheep by name, so exact is the notice he takes of them, the account he keeps of them ; and he leads them out from the fold to the green pastures. And (*ver. 4, 5.*) when he turns them out to graze, he doth not

drive them, but (such was the custom in those times) he goes before them, to prevent any mischief or danger that might meet them, and they being used to it, follow him, and are safe.

5. The strange attendance of the sheep upon the shepherd, they know his voice, so as to discern his mind by it, and to distinguish it from that of a stranger ; for the ox knows his owner, *Isa. i. 3.* and a stranger will they not follow, but as suspecting some ill design will flee from him, not knowing his voice, but that it is not the voice of their own shepherd. This is the parable ; we have the key to it, *Ezek. xxxiv. 31. Ye my flock are men, and I am your God.*

Let us observe something from the parable itself.

1. That good men are fitly compared to sheep. Men, as creatures, depending on their Creator, are called the *sheep of his pasture*. Good men, as new creatures, have the good qualities of sheep, *harmless* and inoffensive as sheep ; *meek* and quiet without noise ; *patient* as sheep under the hand both of the shearer and of the butcher ; *useful* and profitable, tame and tractable to the shepherd, and *social* one with another, and much used in sacrifices.

2. The church of God in the world is a *sheep-fold*, into which the children of God that were scattered abroad, are gathered together, *John xi. 52.* and in which they are united, and incorporated, it is a good fold, *Ezek. xxxiv. 14.* see *Mic. ii. 12.* This fold is well fortified, for God himself is as a wall of fire about it, *Zech. ii. 5.*

3. The sheep-fold lies much exposed to thieves and robbers ; crafty seducers that debauch and deceive, and cruel persecutors that destroy and devour, *grievous wolves*, *Acts xx. 29.* Thieves that would steal Christ's sheep from him, to sacrifice them to devils, or steal their food from them that they might perish for lack of it. *Wolves* in sheep's clothing, *Matt. vii. 16.*

4. The great Shepherd of the sheep has a wonderful care of the flock, and of all that belong to it. God is the great Shepherd, *Psal. xxiii. 1. — lxxx. 1.* He knows them that are his, calls them by name, marks them for himself, leads them out to fat pastures, makes them both feed and rest there ; speaks comfortably to them, guards them by his providence, guides them by his Spirit and word, and goes before them to set them in the way of his steps.

5. The under-shepherds, who are entrusted to feed the flock of God, ought to be careful and faithful in the discharge of that trust ; magistrates must defend them, and protect and advance all their secular interests ; ministers must serve them in their spiritual interests, must feed their souls with the word of God, faithfully opened and applied, and with gospel ordinances duly administered, taking the oversight of them ; they must enter by the door of a regular ordination, and to such the porter will open ; the Spirit of Christ will set before them an open door, give them authority in the church, and assurance in their own bosoms. They must know the members of their flocks by name, and watch over them ; must lead them into the pastures of publick ordinances, preside among them, be their mouth to God, and God's to them ; and in their conversation must be examples to the believers.

6. Those who are truly the sheep of Christ, will be very observant of their shepherd, and very cautious and shy of strangers. (1.) They follow their shepherd, for they know his voice, having both a discerning ear, and an obedient heart. (2.) They flee from a stranger, and dread following him, because they know not his voice. It is dangerous following those in whom we discern not the voice of Christ, and who would draw us from faith in him to fancies concerning him. And they that have experienced the power and efficacy of divine truths upon their souls, and have the favour and relish of them, have a strange sagacity to discover Satan's wiles, and to discern between good and evil.

Secondly, The Jews ignorance of the drift and meaning of this discourse, *ver. 6.* Jesus spoke this parable to them, this figurative, but wise, elegant, and instructive discourse, but they understood not what the things were which he spake unto them ; were not aware whom he meant by the thieves and robbers, and whom by the good shepherd. It is the sin and shame of many who hear the word of Christ, that they do not understand it, and they do not because they will not, and because they will misunderstand it. They have no acquaintance with, nor taste of the things themselves, and therefore do not understand the parables and comparisons with which they are illustrated. The Pharisees had a great conceit of their own knowledge, and could not bear that it should be questioned ; and yet they had not sense enough to understand the things that Jesus spoke of ; they were above their capacity. Many times the greatest pretenders to knowledge, are most ignorant in the things of God.

Thirdly, Christ's explication of this parable, opening the particulars of it fully. Whatever difficulties there may be in the sayings of the Lord Jesus, we shall find him ready to explain himself, if we be but willing to understand him. We shall find one scripture expounding another, and the blessed Spirit interpreter to the blessed Jesus.

Christ in the parable, had distinguished the shepherd from the robber, by this, that he enters in by the door. Now in the red-dition of the parable, he makes himself to be both the door by which the shepherd enters, and the shepherd that enters in by the door. Though it may be a solecism in rhetoric to make the



same person to be both the *door* and the *shepherd*, it is no solecism in divinity to make Christ to have his authority from himself, as he has life in himself; and *himself* to enter by *his own blood*, as the door, into the holy place.

1. Christ is the *door*. This he saith to them who pretended to seek for righteousness, but like the Sodomites, wearied themselves to find the door, where it was not to be found: He saith it to the Jews, who would be thought God's only sheep, and to the Pharisees, who would be thought their only shepherds. *I am the door* of the sheep-fold; the door of the church. 1. He is as a door shut to keep out thieves and robbers, and such as are not fit to be admitted. The shutting of the door is the securing of the house; and what greater security has the church of God than the interposal of the Lord Jesus, and his wisdom, power, and goodness betwixt it, and all its enemies? 2. He is as a door open for passage and communication. 1. By Christ as the door, we have our first admission into the flock of God, John xiv. 6. 2. We go in and out in a religious conversation, assisted by him, accepted in him; walking up and down in his name, Zech. x. 12. 3. By him God comes to his church, visits it, and communicates himself to it. 4. By him as the door the sheep are at last admitted into the heavenly kingdom, Matt. xxv. 34. More particularly,

(1.) Christ is the door of the shepherd, so that none who come not in by him, are to be accounted *pastors*, but (according to the rule laid down, ver. 1.) *thieves and robbers*, though they pretended to be *shepherds*, but the *sheep did not hear them*. All those that had the character of shepherds in Israel, whether magistrates or ministers, that exercised their office without any regard to the Messiah, or any other expectations of him than what were suggested by their own carnal interest.

Observe, 1. The character given of them, they are *thieves and robbers*, ver. 8. all that went before him, not in time, many of them were faithful shepherds, but all that anticipated his commission, and went before he sent them, Jer. xxiii. 21. that assumed a precedency and superiority above him, as the antichrist is said to exalt himself, 2 Thes. ii. 4. The scribes and Pharisees, and chief priests, *All, even as many as have come before me*, that have endeavoured to forestall my interest, and to prevent my gaining any room in the minds of people, by prepossessing them with prejudices against me, they are *thieves and robbers*, and steal those hearts which they have no title to, defrauding the right owner of his property. They condemned our Saviour as a thief and robber, because he did not come in by them as the door, nor take out a licence from them; but he shews that they ought to have received their commission from him, and to have been admitted by him, and to have come after him, which because they did not, but stepped before him, they were *thieves and robbers*. They would not come in as his disciples, and therefore were condemned as usurpers, and their pretended commissions vacated and superseded. Note, Rivals with Christ are robbers of his church, however they pretend to be *shepherds*, nay, *shepherds of shepherds*.

2. The care taken to preserve the sheep from them, but the *sheep did not hear them*. Those that had a true savour of piety, that were spiritual and heavenly, and sincerely devoted to God and godliness, could by no means approve of the traditions of the elders, nor relish their formalities. Christ's disciples, without any particular instructions from their Master, made no conscience of eating with unwashed hands, or plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day; for nothing is more opposite to true Christianity than Pharisaism is; nor any thing more disrelishing to a soul truly devout, than their hypocritical devotions.

(2.) Christ is the *door of the sheep*, ver. 9. By me (δι' ἐμοῦ, through me as the door) if any man enter into the sheepfold as one of the fold, he shall be saved; shall not only be safe from thieves and robbers, but he shall be happy, he shall go in and out.

Here is, 1. Plain direction how to come into the fold, we must come in by Jesus Christ as the door. By faith in him as the great Mediator between God and man, we come into covenant and communion with God. No entering into God's church, but by coming into Christ's church; nor are any looked upon as members of the kingdom of God among men, but those that are willing to submit to the grace and government of the Redeemer. We must now enter by the *door of faith*, Acts xiv. 27. since the door of *innocency* is shut against us, and that *pass* become unpassable, Gen. iii. 24.

2. Precious promises to those who observe this direction:

1. They shall be saved hereafter, that is the privilege of *their home*; these sheep shall be saved from being *distraigned* and *imprisoned* by divine justice for trespasses done, satisfaction being made for the damage by their great shepherd; saved from being a prey to the roaring lion; they shall be *for ever happy*.

2. In the mean time they shall go in and out, and find pasture; that is the privilege of *their way*. They shall have their conversation in the world by the grace of Christ, shall be in his fold as a man at his own house, where he has free ingress, egress, and regress; true believers are at home in Christ, when they go out, they are not *sent out* as strangers, but have liberty to come in again; when they come in, they are not *sent in* as trespassers, but have liberty to go out. They go out to the field in the morning, they come in to the fold at night; and in both the shepherd leads and keeps them, and they find pasture in both; graze in the field,

fodder in the fold. In publick, in private, they have the word of God to converse with, by which their spiritual life is supported and nourished, and out of which their gracious desires are satisfied. they are replenished with the goodness of God's house.

2. Christ is the *shepherd*, ver. 10, &c. He was prophesied of under the Old Testament as a *shepherd*, Isa. xl. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23.—xxxvii. 24. Zech. xiii. 7. In the New Testament he is spoken of as the *great shepherd*, Heb. xiii. 20. the *chief shepherd*, 1 Pet. v. 4. the *shepherd and bishop of our souls*, 1 Pet. ii. 25. God our great owner, the sheep of whose pasture we are by creation, hath constituted his Son Jesus to be our *shepherd*; and here again and again he owns the relation. He hath all that care of his church, and every believer, that a good shepherd has of his flock; and expects all that attendance and observance from the church and every believer, which the shepherds in those countries had from their flocks.

1. Christ is a shepherd, and not as the *thief*, not as those that came not in by the door. Observe,

(1.) The *mischievous* design of the thief, ver. 10. *The thief cometh not with any good intent, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.* (1.) Those whom they steal, whose hearts and affections they steal from Christ and his pastures, they kill and destroy spiritually, for the *heresies* they *privily bring in* are damnable. Deceivers of souls are murderers of souls. They that steal away the scripture by keeping it in an unknown tongue, steal away the sacraments by maiming them, and altering the property of them, that steal away Christ's ordinances, to put their own inventions in the room of them, they kill and destroy; ignorance and idolatry are destructive things. (2.) Those whom they cannot steal, whom they can neither lead, drive, nor carry away from the flock of Christ, they aim by persecutions and massacres to kill and destroy corporally. He that will not suffer himself to be robbed, is in danger to be slain.

(2.) The *gracious* design of the shepherd; he is come,

1. To give life to the sheep. In opposition to the design of the thief, which is to kill and destroy, which was the design of the scribes and Pharisees; Christ saith, I am come among men, 1. That they might have life. He came to put life into the flock, the church in general, which had seemed rather like a valley full of dry bones, than like a pasture covered over with flocks; Christ came to vindicate divine truths, to purify divine ordinances, to redress grievances, and revive dying zeal, to seek them of his flock that were lost, to bind up that which was broken, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. and this to his church is as life from the dead. He came to give life to particular believers, life is inclusive of all good, and stands in opposition to the death threatened, Gen. ii. 17. That we might have life, as a criminal has when he is pardoned, as a sick man when he is cured; a dead man when he is raised; that we might be justified, sanctified, and at last glorified. 2. That they might have it more abundantly, ὡς περισσὸν ἔχων. As we read it, it is comparative, that they might have a life more abundant than that which was lost and forfeited by sin; more abundant than that which was promised by the law of Moses, length of days in Canaan, more abundant than could have been expected, or than we are able to ask or think. But it may be construed without a note of comparison, That they might have abundance, or, might have it abundantly. Christ came to give life and περισσὸν τι something more, something better, life with advantage. That in Christ we might not only live, but live comfortably, live plentifully, live and rejoice, life in abundance is eternal life; life without death, or fear of death; life, and much more.

2. To give his life for the sheep, and this that he might give life to them, ver. 11. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (1.) It is the property of every good shepherd to hazard and expose his life for the sheep. Jacob did so, when he would go through such a fatigue to attend them, Gen. xxxi. 40. so did David, when he slew the lion and the bear. Such a shepherd of souls was St. Paul, who would gladly spend, and be spent, for their service, and counted not his life dear to him, in comparison with their salvation. But (2.) It was the prerogative of the great Shepherd to give his life to purchase his flock, Acts xx. 28. to satisfy for their trespasss, and to shed his blood to wash and cleanse them.

2. Christ is a good shepherd, and not as a hireling, there were many that were not thieves, aiming to kill and destroy the sheep, but passed for shepherds, yet were very careless in the discharge of their duty, and through their neglect the flock was greatly damaged; foolish shepherds, idle shepherds, Zech. xi. 15, 17. In opposition to these,

1. Christ here calls himself the good shepherd, ver. 11. and again, ver. 14. ὁ ποιὼν ὁ κἀλός, that shepherd, that good shepherd, whom God had promised. Note, Jesus Christ is the best of shepherds, the best in the world, to take the oversight of souls, none so skillful, so faithful, so tender, as he, no such feeder and leader, no such protector and healer of souls as he.

2. He proves himself so, in opposition to all hirelings, ver. 12, 13, 14. Where observe,

1. The carelessness of the unfaithful shepherd described, ver. 12, 13. He that is a hireling, that is employed as a servant, and is paid for his pains, whose own the sheep are not, who has neither profit nor loss by them, he sees the wolf coming, or some other danger threatening, and he leaves the sheep to the wolf, for in truth he careth not for them. Here is plain reference to that of the idol shepherd, Zech. xi. 7.

Here is the description of bad shepherds, magistrates and ministers, both their bad principles and bad practices.

1. Their



1. Their *bad principles*, the root of their bad practices. What makes those that have the charge of souls, in trying times, betray their trust, and in quiet times not to mind it? What makes them false and trifling, and self-seeking? It is because they are *hirelings*, and *care not for the sheep*. That is, (1.) The *wealth of the world* is the *chief of their good*; it is because they are *hirelings*. They undertook the shepherd's office, as a trade to live and grow rich by, not as an opportunity of serving Christ, and doing good. It is the love of money, and of their own bellies, that carries them on in it. Not that those are hirelings, who while they *serve at the altar live*, and live comfortably *upon the altar*; the labourer is worthy of his meat; and a scandalous maintenance will soon make a scandalous ministry; but those are *hirelings* that love the *wages* more than the *work*, and set *their hearts* upon that as the *hireling* is said to do, Deut. xxiv. 15. see 1 Sam. ii. 29. Isa. lvi. 11. Mic. iii. 5, 11. (2.) The *work of their place* is the least of their care; they *value not the sheep*, are unconcerned in the souls of others, their business is to be their brothers lords, not their brothers *keepers* or *helpers*; they *seek their own things*, and not, like Timothy, *naturally care for the state of souls*, what can be expected, but that they will flee when the *wolf comes*? He *careth not for the sheep*, for he is one *whose own the sheep are not*; in one respect we may say of the best of the under-shepherds, that the sheep are *not their own*, they have not dominion over them, or property in them. *Feed my sheep and my lambs*, saith Christ. But in respect of dearth and affection they should be *their own*. Paul looked upon those as *his own*, whom he called his *dearly beloved and longed for*. Those who do not cordially espouse the church's interests, and make them *their own*, will not long be faithful to them.

2. Their *bad practices*, the effect of these bad principles; ver. 12. See here, 1. How basely the hireling deserts his post, when he sees the *wolf coming*, though then there is most need of him, he *leaves the sheep and flees*. Note, Those who mind their safety more than their duty, are an easy prey to Satan's temptations. 2. How fatal the consequences are; the hireling fancied the sheep might look to themselves, but it doth not prove so, *the wolf catcheth them*, and *scatters the sheep*, and woful havock is made of the flock, which will all be charged upon the treacherous shepherd. The blood of perishing souls is required at the hand of the careless watchmen.

2. See here the grace and tenderness of the good shepherd, set over against the former, as it was in the prophecy, Ezek. xxxiv. 21, 22. *I am the good shepherd*. It is matter of comfort to the church and all her friends, that however she may be damaged and endangered by the treachery and mismanagement of her under-officers, the Lord Jesus is, and will be, as he ever has been, *the good shepherd*.

Here are two great instances of the shepherd's goodness.

First, His *acquainting* himself with his flock, with all that belong or in any wise appertain to his flock, which are of two sorts, both known to him.

(1.) He is acquainted with all that are *now of his flock*, ver. 14, 15. as the good shepherd, ver. 3, 4. *I know my sheep, and are known of mine*. Note, There is a mutual acquaintance between Christ and true believers; they know one another very well, and knowledge notes affection.

(1.) Christ *knows his sheep*. He knows with a *distinguishing* eye who are his *sheep*, and who are *not*, he knows the *sheep* under their many infirmities, and the goats under their most plausible disguises. He knows, with a *favourable*, eye those that in truth are his own sheep; he takes cognizance of their state, concerns himself for them, has a tender and affectionate regard to them, and is continually mindful of them in the intercession he ever lives to make within the veil; and visits them graciously by his Spirit, and has communion with them, he *knows* them, i. e. he approves and accepts of them, as Ps. i. 6. — xxxvii. 18. Exod. xxxiii. 17.

(2.) He is *known of them*. He observes them with an eye of favour, and they observe him with an eye of faith. Christ's *knowing his sheep*, is put before *their knowing him*, for he knew and loved us first, 1 John iv. 21. and it is not so much our *knowing him*, as our being *known of him*, that is our happiness, Gal. iv. 8. yet it is the character of Christ's sheep, that *they know him*. Know him from all pretenders and intruders; they know his mind, know his voice, know by experience the power of his death. Christ speaks here, as if he gloried in being known by his sheep, and thought their respects an honour to him.

Upon this occasion Christ mentions, ver. 15. the mutual acquaintance between his Father and him; *As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father*. Now this may be considered, either, 1. As the *ground* of that intimate acquaintance and relation, which is between Christ and believers. The covenant of grace, which is the bond of that relation, is founded in the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, which we may be sure stands firm; for the Father and the Son understood one another perfectly well in that matter, and there could be no mistake, which might leave the matter at any uncertainty, or bring it into any hazard. The Lord Jesus *knows whom he hath chosen*, and is sure of them, John xiii. 18. And they also *know whom they have trusted*, and are sure of him, 2 Tim. i. 12. and the ground of both is the perfect knowledge which the Father and Son had of one another's mind, when the *counsel of peace was between them both*. Or, 2. As an apt similitude, illustrating the intimacy that is between Christ and believers; it may be connected with the foregoing words, thus; *I know my sheep, and am known of mine, even as the Father knows me, and I know*

*the Father*; compare John xvii. 21. (1.) As the Father knew the Son, and loved him, and owned him in his sufferings, when he was led as a *sheep* to the slaughter, so Christ knows his sheep, and has a watchful tender eye upon them, will be with them when they are *left alone*, as he was *with him*. (2.) As the Son knew the Father, loved and obeyed him, and always did those things that pleased him, and confided in him as his God, even when he seemed to forsake him, so believers know Christ with an obediential fiducial regard.

2. He is acquainted with those that are *hereafter to be of his flock*, ver. 16. *Other sheep I have*, have a right to, and an interest in, *which are not of this fold*, of the Jewish church, *them also I must bring*. Observe,

(1.) The eye that Christ had to the poor Gentiles; he had sometimes intimated his special concern for *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, to them indeed his personal ministry was confined, but saith he, *I have other sheep*. Those who in process of time should believe in Christ, and be brought into obedience to him from among the Gentiles, are here called *sheep*, and he is said to have them, though as yet they were *uncalled*, and many of them *unborn*, because they were chosen of God, and given to Christ in the counsels of divine love from eternity. Christ has a right to many a soul, by virtue of the Father's donation, and his own purchase, which he has not yet the possession of; thus he had *much people* in Corinth, when as yet it lay in wickedness, Acts xviii. 10. Those *other sheep I have*, saith Christ, I have them on my heart, have them in my eye, am as sure to have them, as if I had them already. Now Christ speaks of those *other sheep*, (1.) To take off the contempt that was put upon him, as having *few followers*, as having but a *little flock*, and therefore if a *good shepherd*, yet a *poor shepherd*; but, saith he, I have more sheep than you see. (2.) To take down the pride and vain-glory of the Jews, who thought the Messiah must gather all his sheep from among them. No, saith Christ, I have others whom I will set with the lambs of my flock, though you disdain to set them with the dogs of your flock.

(2.) The purposes and resolves of his grace concerning them; *them also I must bring*, bring home to God, bring into the church, and in order to that, bring off from their vain conversation, bring them back from their wanderings, as that *lost sheep*, Luke xv. 5. But why *must* he bring them? What was the necessity? (1.) The *necessity of their case* required it; I *must* bring, or they must be left to wander endlessly, for, like sheep, they will never come back of themselves, and no other can or will bring them. (2.) The *necessity of his own engagements* required it; he must bring them, or he would not be faithful to his trust, and true to his undertaking. They are *my own*, bought and paid for, and therefore I *must not* neglect them, or leave them to perish. He *must* in honour bring those whom he was intrusted with.

(3.) The happy effect and consequent of this, in two things, (1.) They shall *hear my voice*. Not only my voice shall be heard among them; whereas they have not heard, and therefore could not believe, now the *sound* of the gospel shall *go to the ends of the earth*, but it shall be heard *by them*; I will speak and give to them to hear. Faith comes by hearing, and our diligent observance of the voice of Christ, is both a means and an evidence of our being brought to Christ, and to God by him. (2.) *There shall be one fold, and one shepherd*. As there is one shepherd, so there shall be one fold. Both Jews and Gentiles, upon their turning to the faith of Christ, shall be incorporated in one church, be joint and equal sharers in the privileges of it without distinction. Being united to Christ, they shall unite in him; two sticks shall become one in the hand of the Lord. Note, One shepherd makes one fold; one Christ makes one church. As the church is *one* in its constitution, subject to one head, animated by one Spirit, and guided by one rule, so the members of it ought to be *one* in love and affection, Eph. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Secondly, Christ's *offering up himself for his sheep*, is another proof of his being a *good shepherd*, and in this he yet more commended his love, ver. 15, 17, 18.

1. He declares his purpose of *dying for his flock*, ver. 15. *I lay down my life for the sheep*. He not only ventured his life for them, in such a case, the hope of saving it may balance the fear of losing it; but he actually *deposited* it, and submitted to a necessity of dying for our redemption, *τιθῆμι*, I put it as a pawn or pledge; as purchase-money paid down. Sheep appointed for the slaughter, ready to be sacrificed, were ransomed with the blood of the shepherd. He laid down his life, *ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων*, not only for the good of the sheep, but in their *stead*. Thousands of sheep had been offered in sacrifice for their shepherds, as sin-offerings, but here, by a surprising reverse, the shepherd is sacrificed for the sheep. When David, the shepherd of Israel, was himself guilty, and the destroying angel drew his sword against the flock for his sake, with good reason did he plead, *These sheep, what evil have they done, let thine hand be against me*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. But the Son of David was sinless and spotless, and his sheep, what evil have they not done? Yet he saith, *Let thine hand be against me*. Christ here seems to refer to that prophet, Zech. xiii. 17. *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd*; and though the smiting of the shepherd be for the present the *scattering* of the flock, it is in order to the gathering of them in.

2. He takes off the offence of the cross, which to many is a stone of stumbling, by four considerations.

1. That his *laying down his life for the sheep* was the condition, the performance of which intitled him to the honours and powers of



of his exalted state, *ver. 17. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.* Upon these terms I am as mediator, to expect my Father's acceptance and approbation, and the glory designed me, that I become a sacrifice for the chosen remnant. Not but that as the Son of God, he was beloved of his Father from eternity, but as *God-man*, as *Immanuel*, he was therefore beloved of the Father, because he undertook to *die for the sheep*; therefore God's soul delighted in him as his elect, because herein he was his *faithful servant*, Isa. xlii. 1. therefore he said, *This is my beloved Son.* What an instance is this of God's love to man, that he loved his Son the more for loving us? See what a value Christ puts upon his Father's love, that to recommend himself to that, he would lay down his life for the sheep: Did he think God's love recompence sufficient for all his services and sufferings, and shall we think it too little for ours, and court the smiles of the world to make it up? *Therefore doth my Father love me*, i. e. me, and all that by faith become one with me; me and the mystical body, *because I lay down my life*; Christ's death was the purchase of his Father's love both to him and us.

2. That his laying down his life was in order to his resuming it; *I lay down my life, that I may receive it again.* (1.) This was the effect of his Father's love, and the first step of his exaltation the fruit of that love. Because he was God's *holy One*, he must not *see corruption*, Psal. xvi. 10. God loved him too well to leave him in the grave. (2.) This he had in his eye in *laying down* his life, that he might have an opportunity of declaring himself to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection, *Rom. i. 4.* By a divine stratagem (like that before Ai, *Josh. viii. 15.*) he yielded to death, as if he were smitten before it, that he might the more gloriously conquer death, and triumph over the grave. He laid down a *vilified* body, that he might resume a *glorified* one, fit to ascend to the world of spirits; laid down a life adapted to this world, but resumed one adapted to the other, like a corn of wheat, *John xii. 24.*

3. That he was perfectly voluntary in his sufferings and death, *ver. 18. No one doth or can force my life from me against my will, but I freely lay it down of myself, I deliver it as my own act and deed, for I have (which no man has) power to lay it down, and take it again.*

1. See here the *power of Christ*, as the Lord of life, particularly of his own life, which he had *in himself*.

1. He had power to *keep his life* against all the world, so that it could not be wrested from him without his own consent. Though Christ's life seem to be taken by storm, yet really it was surrendered, otherwise it had been impregnable, and never taken. The Lord Jesus did not fall into the hands of his persecutors, because he could not avoid it, but threw himself into their hands, because his hour was come. *No man taketh my life from me.* This was such a challenge as was never given by the most daring hero.

2. He had power to *lay down his life.* (1.) He had *ability* to do it. He could, when he pleased, slip the knot of union between soul and body, and without any act of violence done to himself, could disengage them from each other: having voluntarily *taken up* a body, he could voluntarily lay it down again; which appeared when he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. (2.) He had *authority* to do it, *ἐξουσίαν*. Though we could find instruments of cruelty, wherewith to make an end of our own lives, yet *id possumus quod jure possumus*; we are not at liberty to do it; but Christ had a sovereign authority to dispose of his own life as he pleased; he was no debtor, as we are either to life or death, but perfectly *sui juris*.

3. He had power to *take it again.* We have not, our life once laid down, is *as water spilt upon the ground*; but Christ, when he laid down his life, still had it within reach, within call, and could resume it again. Parting with it by a voluntary conveyance, he might limit the surrender at pleasure, and he did it with a power of revocation; which was necessary to preserve the intentions of the surrender.

2. See here the *grace* of Christ, since none could demand his life of him by law, or extort it by force, he *laid down of himself* for our redemption. He offered himself to be the *Saviour*, *Lo, I come*, and then the necessity of our case calling for it, he offered himself to be a *sacrifice*, *Here am I, let those go their way; by the which will we are sanctified*, Heb. x. 10. He was both the offerer and the offering, so that his *laying down his life* was his offering up himself.

4. That he did all this by the express order and appointment of his Father, into which he ultimately resolves the whole affair. *This commandment have I received of my Father*; not such a commandment as made what he did necessary, prior to his own susception and undertaking; but this was *the law of mediation*, which he was willing to have *written in his heart*, so as to *delight in doing the will of God* according to it, *Psal. xl. 8.*

19. ¶ There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20. And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21. Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil: Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

We have here an account of the peoples different sentiments concerning Christ, on occasion of the foregoing discourse; there was a *division*, a *schism* among them, they differed in their opinions, which threw them into heats and parties. Such a *ferment* as this they had been in before, *chap. vii. 43. — ix. 16.* and where

there has once been a division, a little thing will make a *division* again. Rents are sooner *made*, than made up or mended. This division was occasioned by the sayings of Christ, which one would think should rather have united them all in him as their centre, but they set them at variance, as Christ foresaw, *Luke xii. 42.* but it is better men should be *divided* about the doctrine of Christ, than united in the service of sin, *Luke xi. 21.*

See what the debate was in particular.

1. Some upon this occasion spoke ill of Christ and of his sayings, either openly in the face of the assembly, for his enemies were very impudent, or privately among themselves; they said, *He has a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?*

(1.) They reproach him, as a *demoniack*. The worst of characters is put upon the best of men. He is a distracted man, he raves, and is delirious, and no more to be heard, than the rambles of a man in Bedlam. Thus still, if a man preaches seriously, and pressingly of another world, he shall be said to talk like an enthusiast, and it is all imputed to fancy, a heated brain, and a crazed imagination.

(2.) They ridicule his hearers; *Why hear ye him?* why do you so far encourage him, as to take notice of what he saith? Note, Satan ruins many, by putting them out of conceit with the word and ordinances, and representing it as a weak and silly thing to attend upon them. Men would not be thus laughed out of their necessary food, and yet suffer themselves thus to be laughed out of what is more necessary. They that hear Christ, and mix faith with what they hear, will soon be able to give a good account *why they hear him.*

2. Others stood up in defence of him and his discourse, and though the stream ran strong, dared to swim against it; and though perhaps they did not believe on him as the Messiah, yet they could not bear to hear him thus abused.

If they could say no more of him, this they would maintain, that he was a man in his wits, that he had not a devil, that he was neither *senseless* nor *graceless*. The absurd, and most unreasonable reproaches, that have sometimes been cast upon Christ and his gospel, have excited those to appear for him and it, who otherwise had no great affection to either. Two things they plead:

1. The excellency of his doctrine: *These are not the words of him that hath a devil*; they are not idle words; distracted men do not use to talk at this rate. These are not the words of one that is either *violently possessed* with a devil, or *voluntarily in league* with the devil. Christianity, if it be not the true religion, is certainly the greatest cheat that ever was put upon the world; and if so, it must be of the devil, who is the father of all lyes; but it is certain, the doctrine of Christ is no *doctrine of devils*, for it is levelled directly against the devil's kingdom, and Satan is too subtle to be divided against himself. So much of holiness there is in the words of Christ, that we may conclude, they are *not the words of one that has a devil*, and therefore are the words of one that was sent of God; are not from hell, and therefore must be from heaven.

2. The power of his miracles; *Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?* i. e. a man that has a devil. Neither mad men nor ill men use to work miracles. Devils are not such lords of the power of nature, as to be *able* to work such miracles; nor are they such friends to mankind, as to be *willing* to work them if they were able. The devil will sooner put out mens eyes than open them. Therefore Jesus *had not a devil*.

22. ¶ And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. 24. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. 25. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26. But ye believe not; because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. 29. My Father which gave *them* me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. 30. I and my Father are one. 31. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 33. The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stoned thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 34. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 35. If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken: 36. Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? 37. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that



ye may know and believe that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

We have here another rencounter between Christ and the Jews in the temple, in which it is hard to say which is more strange, the gracious words that came out of his mouth, or the spiteful ones that came out of theirs.

1. We have here the time when this conference was, it was *at the feast of dedication, and it was winter*, a feast that was annually observed by consent, in remembrance of the dedication of a new altar, and the purging of the temple, by Judas Maccabæus, after the temple had been profaned, and the altar defiled; we have the story of it at large, in the history of the Maccabees, *lib. 1. cap. 4.* we have the prophecy of it, *Dan. viii. 13. 14.* see more of the feast, *2 Mac. i. 18.* The return of their liberty was to them as life from the dead, and in remembrance of it, they kept an annual feast on the twenty fifth day of the month *Cisleu*, about the beginning of *December*, and seven days after. The celebrating of it was not confined to Jerusalem, as that of the divine feasts was, but every one observed it in his own place, not as a *holy time*, it is only a divine institution that can *sanctify* a day, but as a *good time*, as the days of Purim, *Esth. ix. 18.* Christ forecasted to be now at Jerusalem, not in honour of the feast, which did not require his attendance there, but that he might improve those eight days of vacation for good purposes.

2. The place where it was, *ver. 23. Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch*, so called, *Acts iii. 11.* not because built by Solomon, but in the same place with that which had born his name in the first temple, and the name was kept up for the greater reputation of it. Here Christ walked to observe the proceedings of the great Sanhedrin that sat here, *Psal. lxxxii. 1.* he walked ready to give audience to any that should apply themselves to him, to offer them his service. He walked, as it should seem, for some time *alone*, as one neglected; walked pensive in the foresight of the ruin of the temple. Those that have any thing to say to Christ, may find him in the temple and walk with him there.

3. The conference it self, in which observe,

First, A weighty question put to him by the Jews, *ver. 24.* They came round about him to teaze him; he was waiting for an opportunity to do them a *kindness*, and they took the opportunity to do him a *mischiefe*: Ill will for good will is no rare and uncommon return. He could not enjoy himself, no not in the temple, his Father's house, without disturbance. They came about him as it were to lay siege to him; *encompassed him about like bees.* They came about him as if they had a joint and unanimous desire to be *satisfied*; came as one man, pretending an *impartial*, and importunate enquiry after truth, but intending a general assault upon our Lord Jesus, and seemed to speak the sense of their nation, as if they were the mouth of all the Jews, *How long dost thou make us to doubt? if thou be the Christ, tell us.*

1. They quarrel with him as if he had unfairly held them in suspense hitherto. *Τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν ἀΐσεις, How long dost thou steal away our hearts?* Or, *take away our souls?* So some read it; basely intimating that what share he had of the peoples love and respect he did not come fairly by it, but by indirect methods, as Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel; and as seducers, deceive the *hearts of the simple*, and so draw away disciples after them, *Rom. xvi. 18. Acts x. 30.* But most interpreters understand it as we do, *How long dost thou keep us in suspense?* How long are we kept debating whether thou be the Christ or no, and not able to determine the question? Now, (1.) It was the effect of their infidelity, and powerful prejudices, that after our Lord Jesus had so fully proved himself to be the Christ, they were still in doubt concerning it; this they willingly hesitated about, when they might easily have been satisfied. The struggle was between their convictions, which told them he was Christ; and their corruptions, which said no, because he was not such a Christ as they expected. Those who chuse to be scepticks, may, if they please, hold the balance so, as that the most cogent arguments may not weigh down the most trifling objections, but the scales may still hang even. (2.) It was an instance of their impudence and presumption, that they laid the blame of their doubting upon Christ himself, as if he made them to doubt by inconsistency with himself, whereas in truth they made themselves doubt by indulging their prejudices. If Wisdom's sayings appear doubtful, the fault is not in the object, they are all plain to him that understandeth, but in the eye. Christ would make us to believe; we make ourselves to doubt.

2. They challenge him to give a direct and categorical answer, whether he were the Messiah or no? *If thou be the Christ*, as many believe thou art, *tell us plainly*, not by parables, as, *I am the light of the world*, and *the good shepherd*, &c. and the like, but *totidem verbis*, either that thou art the Christ, or as John Baptist, that thou art not, *John i. 20.* Now this pressing query of theirs was seemingly good, they pretended to be desirous to know the truth, as if they were ready to embrace it; but it was *really bad*, and put with an ill design; for if he should tell them plainly that he was the Christ, there needed no more to make him obnoxious to the jealousy and severity of the Roman government. Every one knew the Messiah was to be a king, and therefore whoever pretended to be the Messiah would be prosecuted as a traitor, which was the thing they would have been at; for let him tell them never so plainly

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that he was the Christ, they would have this to say presently, *Thou bearest witness of thy self*, as they had, *John viii. 13.*

Secondly, Christ's answer to this question; in which,

1. He justifies himself as not at all accessary to their infidelity and scepticism, referring them, (1.) To what he had said, *I have told you.* He had told them that he was the Son of God, the Son of man; that he had life in himself, that he had *authority to execute judgment*, &c. And is not this the Christ then? These things he had told them, and they believed not, why then should they be told them again merely to gratify their curiosity? *Ye believed not.* They pretended that they only doubted, but Christ tells them they did not believe. Scepticism in religion is no better than downright infidelity. It is not for us to *teach* God how he should *teach* us, nor prescribe to him how plainly he should tell us his mind, but be thankful for divine revelation as we have it, which if we do not believe, neither would we be perswaded if it were never so much adapted to our humour. (2.) He refers them to *his works*, to the example of his life, which was not only perfectly pure, but highly beneficent, and of a piece with his doctrine; and especially to his miracles, which he wrought for the confirmation of his doctrine. It was certain no man could do those miracles except God were with him, and God would not be with him to attest a forgery.

2. He condemns them for their obstinate unbelief, notwithstanding all the most plain and powerful arguments used to convince them. *Ye believed not*; and again, *ye believed not.* You still are what you always were, obstinate in your unbelief.

But the reason he gives is very surprizing, *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep*: You believe not in me, because you belong not to me.

(1.) You are not *disposed* to be my followers; are not of a tractable, teachable temper, have no inclination to receive the doctrine and law of the Messiah; you will not herd your selves with my sheep, will not come and see, come and hear my voice. Rooted antipathies of the gospel of Christ are the bonds of iniquity and infidelity.

(2.) You are not *designed* to be my followers; you are not of those that were given me by my Father to be brought to grace and glory. You are not of the number of the elect, and your unbelief, if you persist in it, will be a certain evidence that you are not. Note, Those to whom God never gives the grace of *faith*, were never designed for heaven and happiness. What Solomon saith of immorality is true of infidelity, *It is a deep ditch, and he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein*, *Prov. xxii. 14.* *Non esse electum, non est causa incredulitatis propriè dicta, sed causa per accidens: Fides autem est donum Dei & effectus prædestinationis.* So Jansenius distinguisheth well here.

3. He takes this occasion to describe both the gracious disposition, and the happy state of those that are *his sheep*; for such there are, though they be not.

1. To convince them that they were not his sheep, he tells them what were the characters of his sheep.

(1.) They *hear his voice*, *ver. 27.* for they know it to be his, *ver. 4.* and he has undertaken that they shall hear it, *ver. 16.* They discern it, *It is the voice of my beloved*, *Cant. ii. 8.* They delight in it, are in their element when they are sitting at his feet to hear his word. They do according to it, and make his word their rule. Christ will not account those his sheep that are deaf to his calls, deaf to his charms, *Psal. lviii. 5.*

(2.) They *follow him*, they submit to his conduct by a chearful obedience to all his commands, and a pleasant conformity to his Spirit and pattern: The word of command hath always been, *Follow me.* We must eye him as our leader and captain, and *tread in his steps*, and walk as he walked; follow the prescriptions of his word, the intimations of his providence, and the directions of his Spirit; *follow the Lamb*, the *Dux gregis*, *whithersoever he goes.* In vain do we *hear his voice* if we do not *follow him*.

2. To convince them that it was their great *unhappiness* and *misery* not to be of Christ's sheep, he here describes the blessed *state* and *case* of those that are, which would likewise serve for the support and comfort of his poor despised followers, and keep them from envying the power and grandeur of those that were not of his sheep.

1. Our Lord Jesus *takes cognizance* of his sheep, they *hear my voice*, and *I know them*; he distinguisheth them from others, *2 Tim. ii. 19.* hath a particular regard to every individual, *Psal. xxxiv. 6.* he knows their wants and desires; knows their souls in adversity where to find them, and what to do for them. He knows others afar off, but knows them near at hand.

2. He has provided a happiness for them, suited to them. *I give unto them eternal life*, *ver. 28.* (1.) The estate settled upon them is rich and valuable; it is life, eternal life. Man has a *living soul*, therefore the happiness provided is *life*, suited to his nature. Man has no *immortal* soul, therefore the happiness provided is *eternal life*, running parallel with his duration. *Life eternal* is the felicity and chief good of a *soul immortal*. (2.) The manner of conveyance is *free*, *I give it to them*; it is not *bargained* and *sold* upon a valuable consideration, but *given* by the free grace of Jesus Christ. The donor has power to give it: He who is the fountain of life, and father of eternity, has authorized Christ to give eternal life, *John xvii. 2.* Not *I will* give it, but *I do* give it, it is a gift *in present*. He gives the assurance of it, the pledge and earnest of it, the first-fruits and foretastes of it. That *spiritual* life;



life, which is *eternal* life begun, heaven in the seed, in the bud, in the embryo.

3. He hath undertaken for their security, and preservation to this happiness. 1. They shall be *saved from everlasting perdition*. *They shall by no means perish for ever*, so the words are. As there is an eternal life, so there is an eternal destruction, the soul not annihilated, but ruined; its being continued, but its comfort and happiness irrecoverably lost: All believers are *saved from this*, whatever crosses they may come under, they shall not *come into condemnation*. A man is never undone till he is in hell, and they shall not go down to that. Shepherds that have large flocks, oft lose some of the sheep, and suffer them to perish, but Christ has engaged that none of his sheep shall perish, not one. 2. They cannot be kept from their *everlasting happiness*; it is in reserve, but he that gives it them will preserve them to it.

1. His own power is engaged for them: *Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand*. A mighty contest is here supposed about these sheep. The shepherd is so careful of their welfare, that he has them not only within his fold, and under his eye, but *in his hand*, interested in his special love, and taken under his special protection; *all his saints are in thy hand*. Deut. xxxiii. 3. yet their enemies are so daring, that they attempt to pluck them out of his hand; *his*, whose *own* they are, whose *care* they are; but they cannot, they shall not, do it. Note, those are safe who are in the hands of the Lord Jesus. The saints are *preserved in Christ Jesus*; and their salvation is not in their own keeping, but in the keeping of a Mediator. The Pharisees and rulers did all they could to frighten the disciples of Christ from following him, reproving and threatening them, but Christ saith, they should not prevail.

2. His Father's power is likewise engaged for their preservation, *ver. 29*. He now appeared in wickedness, and lest his security should therefore be thought *insufficient*, he brings in his Father as a farther security. Observe,

(1.) The power of the Father. *My Father is greater than all*; greater than all the other *friends* of the church, all the other shepherds, magistrates, or ministers, and able to do that for them, which they cannot do. Those shepherds slumber and sleep, and it will be easy to pluck the sheep out of their hands, but he keeps his flock day and night. Greater than all the enemies of the church, all the opposition given to her interests, and able to secure his own against all their insults; he is *greater than all* the combined force of hell and earth. He is greater in wisdom, than the *old serpent*, though noted for subtilty; greater in strength than the great red dragon, though his name be *legion*, and his title *principalities and powers*. The devil and his angels have had many a push, many a pluck for the mastery, but have never yet prevailed, Rev. xii. 7. *The Lord on high is mightier*.

(2.) The interest of the Father in the sheep, for the sake of which this power is engaged for them; it is my Father *that gave them me*, and he is concerned in honour to uphold his gift: They were given to the Son as a *trust* to be managed by him, and therefore God will still look after them. All the divine power is engaged for the accomplishment of all the divine counsels.

(3.) The safety of the saints inferred from these two. If this be so, then *none* (neither man nor devil) is *able to pluck them out of the Father's hand*, not able to deprive them of the grace they have, or to hinder them from the glory that is designed them; not able to put them out of God's protection, nor get them into their own power. Christ had himself experienced the power of his Father *upholding* and *strengthening* him, and therefore puts all his followers into his hand too. He that secured the glory of the Redeemer, will secure the glory of the redeemed.

Further to corroborate the security, that the sheep of Christ may have strong consolation, he asserts the union of these two undertakers, *I and my Father are one*, and have jointly and severally undertaken for the protection of the saints, and their perfection. This speaks, not only the harmony and consent, and good understanding that was between the Father and the Son in the work of man's redemption, every good man is so far one with God, as to concur with him; therefore it must be meant of the *oneness of the nature* of Father and Son, that they are the same in substance, and equal in power and glory.

The Fathers urged this, both against the Sabellians, to prove the distinction, and plurality of the persons, that the Father and the Son are two; and against the Arians, to prove the unity of the nature, that these two are *one*. If we should altogether hold our peace concerning this sense of the words, even the stones which the Jews took up to cast at him, would speak it out, for they understood him as hereby making himself God, *ver. 33*. and he did not deny it. He proves that none could pluck them out of *his hand*, because they could not pluck them out of *the Father's hand*, which had not been a conclusive argument, if the Son had not had the same almighty power with the Father, and consequently been one with him in essence and operation.

Thirdly, The rage, the outrage of the Jews against him for this discourse, *The Jews took up stones again*, *ver. 31*. It is not the word that is used before, *chap. viii. 59*. but *ἐβάσαντο λίθους*, they carried stones, great stones, stones that were a *load*, such as they used in stoning malefactors; they brought them from some place at a distance, as it were preparing things for his execution without any judicial process; as if he were convicted of blasphemy upon the

notorious evidence of the fact, which needed no further trial. The absurdity of this insult the Jews made upon Christ will appear, if we consider, 1. That they had *imperiously*, not to say *impudently*, challenged him to tell them plainly whether he were the Christ or no, and yet now he not only said it, but proved himself so, they condemned him for it as a malefactor. If the preachers of the truth propose it *modestly*, they are branded as cowards; if *boldly*, as insolent, *but wisdom is justified of her children*. 2. That when they had made the like attempt before, it was in vain, he *escaped through the midst of them*, *chap. v. 59*. yet they repeat their baffled attempt. Daring sinners will throw stones at heaven, though they return upon their own heads; and will strengthen themselves against the Almighty, though never any hardened themselves against him and prospered.

Fourthly, Christ's tender expostulation with them upon occasion of this outrage, *ver. 32*. *Jesus answered* what they did, for we do not find that they said *any thing*, unless perhaps they stirred up the crowd that yet had gathered about him to join with them, crying, stone him, stone him, as afterwards, crucify him, crucify him. When he could have answered them with fire from heaven, he mildly replied, *Many good works have I shewed you from my Father, for which of those works do you stone me?* Words so very tender, that one would think they should have melted a heart of stone.

In dealing with his enemies, he still argued from his works; men evidence what they are by what they do. His *good works*, καλὰ ἔργα, excellent, eminent works. *Opera eximia vel præclara*, it signifies both great works, and good works.

1. The divine power of his works convicted them of the most obstinate infidelity. They were works *from his Father*, so far above the reach and course of nature, as to prove him that did them *sent of God*, and acting by commission from him. These works he *shewed* them, he did them openly before the people, and not in a corner; his works would bear the test, and refer themselves to the testimony of the most inquisitive, and impartial spectators. He did not shew his works by candle-light, as they that do them only for *shew*, but he shewed them at noon-day before the world, *John xviii. 20*. see *Psal. cxi. 6*. His works so undeniably *demonstrated*, that they were an incontestable *demonstration* of the validity of his commission.

2. The divine grace of his works convicted them of the most base ingratitude. The works he did among them were not only *miracles* but *mercies*; not only works of wonder to amaze them, but works of love and kindness to do them good, and so make them good, and endear himself to them: He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils, which were favours, not only to the persons concerned, but to the publick; these he had repeated, and multiplied, now, *for which of these do ye stone me?* Ye cannot say I have done you any harm, or given you any just provocation; if therefore you will pick a quarrel with me, it must be for some good work, some good turn done you, tell me for which. Note, 1. The horrid ingratitude that there is in our sins against God and Jesus Christ, is a great aggravation of them, and makes them appear exceeding sinful. See how God argues to this purpose, *Deut. xxxii. 6*. *Jer. ii. 5*. *Mic. vi. 3*. 2. We must not think it strange if we meet with those who not only hate us without cause, but are our adversaries for our love, *Psal. xxxv. 12*.—*xli. 9*. When he asks, *for which of these do ye stone me*, as he intimates the abundant satisfaction he had in his own innocency, which gives a man courage in a suffering day, so he puts his persecutors upon considering what was the true reason of their enmity, and asking, as all those should do that create trouble to their neighbour, *Why persecute we him?* As Job adviseth his friends to do, *Job xix. 28*.

Fifthly, Their vindication of the attempt they made upon Christ, and the cause upon which they ground their prosecution, *ver. 33*. What sin will want fig-leaves with which to cover itself, when even the bloody persecutors of the Son of God could find something to say for themselves.

1. They would not be thought such enemies to their country, as to persecute him for a good work; *For a good work we stone thee not*: For indeed they would scarce allow any of his works to be so. His curing the impotent man, *John v.* and the blind man, *John ix.* were so far from being acknowledged good services to the town, and meritorious, that they were put upon the score of his crimes, because done on the sabbath-day. But if he had done any good works, they would not own that they *stoned him for them*, though these were really the things that did most exasperate them, *chap. xi. 47*. thus though most absurd, they could not be brought to own their absurdities.

2. They would be thought such friends to God and his glory, as to prosecute him for *blasphemy*, *because that thou being a man makest thyself God*.

Here is, 1. A pretended zeal for the law. They seem mightily concerned for the honour of the divine majesty, and to be seized with a religious horror at that which they imagined to be a reproach to it. A *blasphemer* was to be *stoned*, Lev. xxiv. 16. This law, they thought, did not only justify, but sanctify what they attempted, as *Acts xxvi. 9*. Note, The vilest practices are often varnished with plausible pretences. As nothing is more *courageous* than a well informed conscience, so nothing more *outrageous* than a mistaken one. See *Isa. lxvi. 5*. *John xvi. 2*.



2. A real enmity to the gospel, on which they could not put a greater affront, than by representing Christ as a blasphemer. It is no new thing for the worst of characters to be put upon the best of men, by those that resolve to give them the worst of treatment.

1. The crime laid to his charge is *blasphemy*, speaking reproachfully, and despitefully of God. God himself is out of the sinner's reach, and not capable of receiving any real injury; and therefore enmity to God spits its venom at his name, and so shews its ill-will.

2. The proof of the crime, *thou being a man makest thy self God*. And as it is God's glory that *he is God*, which we rob him of, when we make him altogether such a one as our selves; so it is his glory, that *besides him there is no other*, which we rob him of, when we make our selves, or any creature altogether like him.

Now, 1. Thus far they were in the right, that what Christ said of himself amounted to this, that he was God, for he had said that he was *one with the Father*, and that he would *give eternal life*; and Christ doth not deny it, which he would have done, if it had been a mistaken inference from his words.

But, 2. They were much mistaken, when they looked upon him as a *meer man*, and that the godhead he claimed was an usurpation, and of his own making. They thought it absurd and impious that such a one as he who appeared in the fashion of a poor, mean, despicable man, should profess himself the Messiah, and entitle himself to the honours confessedly due to the Son of God. Note, (1.) Those who say that Jesus is a *mere man*, and only *made god*, as the Socinians say, do in effect charge him with blasphemy, but do effectually *prove* it upon themselves. (2.) He who being a man, a sinful man, makes himself a god, as the Pope doth, who claims divine powers and prerogatives, is, no question, a *blasphemer*, and *that antichrist*.

Sixthly, Christ's reply to their accusation of him (for so their vindication of themselves was) and his making good of those claims which they imputed to him as blasphemous, *ver. 34, &c.* where he proves himself to be no blasphemer, by two arguments.

1. By an argument taken from *God's word*. He appeals to what was *written in their law*, i. e. in the Old Testament, whoever opposeth Christ, he is sure to have the scripture *on his side*. It is written, *Psal. lxxxii. 6. I have said ye are gods*. It is an argument *à minore ad majus*. If they were gods, much more am I. Observe,

(1.) How he explains the text, *ver. 35. He called them gods to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken*. The word of God's *commission* came to them, appointing them to their offices, as judges, and therefore they are called *gods*, *Exod. xxii. 28*. To some the word of God came immediately, as to Moses; to others in the way of an instituted ordinance. Magistracy is a divine institution; and magistrates are God's delegates, and therefore the scripture calleth them gods; and we are sure the scripture *cannot be broken*, or broken in upon, or found fault with. Every word of God is *right*, the very stile and language of scripture is unexceptionable, and not to be corrected, *Matt. v. 18*.

(2.) How he applies it. Thus much in general is easily inferred; that they were very rash and unreasonable who condemned Christ as a blasphemer, only for calling himself the Son of God, when yet they themselves called their rulers so, and therein the scripture warranted them. But the argument goes further, *ver. 36*. If magistrates were called gods, because they were commissioned to administer justice in the nation, *say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, thou blasphemest?* We have here two things concerning the Lord Jesus.

1. The honour done him by the Father, which he justly glories in, he *sanctified him*, and *sent him into the world*. Magistrates were called the sons of God, though the word of God only came to them, and the spirit of government came upon them by measure, as upon Saul; but our Lord Jesus was himself the *Word*, and had the *Spirit without measure*; they were constituted for a particular country, city, or nation, but he was sent *into the world*, vested with an universal authority as lord of all; they were *sent to*, as persons at a distance, he was *sent forth* as having been from eternity with God. The Father *sanctified him*, i. e. designed him, and set him apart to the office of Mediator, and qualified, and fitted him for that office: *Sanctifying him* is the same with *sealing him*, *John vi. 27*. Note, Whom the Father *sends* he *sanctifies*, whom he designs for holy purposes, he prepares with holy principles and dispositions: The holy God will reward, and therefore will employ none but such as he finds, or makes holy. The Father's *sanctifying* and *sending* him is here vouched as a sufficient warrant for his calling himself the Son of God; for because he was a *holy thing* he was called the Son of God, *Luke i. 35. see Rom. i. 4*.

2. The dishonour done him by the Jews, which he justly complains of, that they impiously said of him whom the Father had thus dignified, that he was a *blasphemer*, because he called himself the Son of God. *Say ye of him so and so? Dare you say so? Dare you thus set your mouths against the heavens? Have you brow and brags enough to tell the God of truth he lies? Or to condemn him that is most just; look me in the face, and say it if you can; what say ye of the Son of God that he is a blasphemer? If devils had said so of him, whom he came to condemn, it had not been so strange, but that men should say so of him, whom he came to teach and save, be astonished, O heavens, at this!* See what is the

language of an obstinate unbelief, it doth in effect call the holy Jesus a *blasphemer*. It is hard to say which is more to be admired, that men who breathe in God's air should yet speak such things; or that men who have spoken such things, should yet still be suffered to breathe in God's air. The wickedness of man, and the patience of God, as it were, contend which shall be most *wonderful*.

2. By an argument taken from *his own works*, *ver. 37. 38*. In the former he only answered the charge of blasphemy by an argument *ad hominem*, but he here makes out his own claims, and proves that he and the Father are one, *ver. 37. 38. If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not*. Though he might justly have abandoned such blasphemous wretches as incurable; yet he vouchsafes to reason with them.

Observe, 1. *From what* he argues, from his works, which he had oft vouched as his credentials, and the proofs of his mission. As he proved himself sent of God by the *divinity* of his works, so we must prove our selves allied to Christ by the *Christianity* of ours. (1.) The argument is very cogent, for the works he did were the *works of his Father*, which the Father only could do, and which could not be done in the ordinary course of nature, but only by the sovereign, over-ruling power of the God of nature. *Opera Deo propria*, and *Opera Deo digna*: The works of a divine power. He that can dispense with the laws of nature, repeal, alter, and over-rule them at his pleasure, by his own power, is certainly the sovereign prince who first instituted, and enacted those laws. The miracles which the apostles wrought in his name, and by his power, and for the confirmation of his doctrine, corroborated this argument, and continued the evidence of it when he was gone. (2.) It is very fairly proposed as can be desired, and put to a short issue.

(1.) *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not*. He doth not demand a blind and implicit faith, nor an assent to his divine mission further than he gave proof of it. He did not wind himself into the affections of people, nor wheedle them by sly insinuations, nor impose upon their credulity by bold assertions, but with the greatest fairness imaginable quitted all demands of their faith, further than he produced warrants for these demands. Christ is no hard master, who expects to reap in assents, where he has not sown in arguments. None shall perish for the disbelief of that which was not proposed to them with sufficient motives of credibility, infinite wisdom itself being judge.

(2.) But if I do the works of my Father; if I work undeniable miracles for the confirmation of a holy doctrine, *though you believe not me*, though you are so scrupulous as not to take my word, yet *believe the works*: Believe your own eyes, your own reason, the thing speaks itself plain enough. As the invisible things of the Creator are clearly seen by his works of creation and common providence, *Rom. i. 20*. so the invisible things of the Redeemer were seen by his miracles, and by all his works both of power and mercy; so that they who were not convinced by these works were *without excuse*.

2. *For what* he argues, that ye may know and believe, may believe it intelligently, and with an entire satisfaction, that *the Father is in me, and I in him*, which is the same with what he had said, *ver. 30. I and my Father are one*. The Father was so in the Son, as that in him *dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead*, and it was by a divine power that he wrought his miracles; the Son was so in the Father, as that he was perfectly acquainted with the whole of his mind, not by communication, but by consciousness, having lain in his bosom. This we must *know*; not know and *explain*, for we cannot by searching find it out to perfection, but know and *believe* it; acknowledging and adoring the depth when we cannot find the bottom.

39. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, 40. And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. 41. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man, were true. 42. And many believed on him there.

We have here the issue of the conference with the Jews. One would have thought it should have convinced and melted them, but their hearts were hardened. Here we are told,

1. How they attacked him by force. Therefore they sought again to take him, *ver. 39*. Therefore (1.) Because he had fully answered their charge of blasphemy, and wiped off that imputation, so that they could not for shame go on with their attempt to stone him, therefore they contrived to seize him, and prosecute him as an offender against the state. When they were constrained to drop their attempt by a popular tumult, they would try what they could do under colour of a legal process. See *Rev. xii. 13*. Or, (2.) Because he persevered in the same testimony concerning himself, they persisted in their malice against him. What he had said before he did in effect say again, for the faithful witness never runs in from what he has once said; and therefore having the same provocation, they express the same resentments, and justify their attempt to stone him, by another attempt to take him. Such is the temper of a persecuting spirit, and such its politicks, *malè facta malè factis tegere ne perfluant*.



2. How he *avoided* them by *flight*, not an inglorious retreat, in which there was any thing of *human* infirmity but a *glorious* retirement, in which there was much of a divine power. He *escaped out of their hands*, not by the interposal of any friend that helped him, but by his own wisdom he *got clear* of them; either drew a veil over himself, or cast a mist before their eyes, or tied the hands of those whose hearts he did not turn. Note, No weapon formed against our Lord Jesus shall prosper, *Psal. ii. 5.* He *escaped*, not because he was afraid to suffer, but because *his hour was not come*. And he who knew how to *deliver himself*, no doubt knows how to *deliver the godly out of temptation*, and to make a way for them to *escape*.

3. How he disposed of himself in his retirement, he *went away again beyond Jordan*, ver. 40. The bishop of our souls came not to be fixed in one see, but to go about from place to place doing good. This great benefactor was never out of his way, for wherever he came there was work to be done. Though Jerusalem was the royal city, yet he made many a kind visit to the country, not only his own country Galilee, but to other parts, even those that lay most remote beyond Jordan. Now observe,

1. What *shelter* he found there. He went into a private part of the country, and *there he abode*, there he found some rest and quietness, when in Jerusalem he could find none. Note, Though persecutors may drive Christ and his gospel out of their own city or country, they cannot drive him or it out of the world. Though Jerusalem was not *gathered*, nor would be, yet Christ was glorious, and would be. Christ's going now beyond Jordan, was a figure of the taking of the kingdom of God from the Jews, and bringing it to the Gentiles. Christ and his gospel have often found better entertainment among the plain country people, than among *the wise, the mighty, the noble*, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

2. What *success* he found there. He did not go thither, merely for his own security, but to do good there; and therefore he chose to go thither where John at *first baptized*, John i. 28. because there could not but remain some impressions of John's ministry and baptism thereabouts, which would dispose them to receive Christ and his doctrine; for it was not three years since John was baptizing, and Christ was himself baptized here at Bethabara. Christ came hither now to see what fruit there was of all the pains John Baptist had taken among them, and what they retained of the things they then heard and received. And the event in some measure answered expectation, for we are told,

1. That they *flocked* after him, ver. 41. Many resorted to him. The return of the means of grace to a place after they have been for some time intermitted, commonly occasions a great stirring of affections. Some think Christ chose to *abide* at Bethabara, the house of *passage*, where the ferry-boats lay, by which they crossed the river Jordan, than the confluence of people thither might give an opportunity of teaching many who would come and hear him when it *lay in their way*, that would scarce go a step out of the road for an opportunity of attending on his word.

2. That they *reasoned* in his favours, and sought arguments to induce them to close with him as much as they at Jerusalem sought objections against him. They said very judiciously, *John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of this man were true*. Two things they considered upon, recollecting what they had seen and heard from John, and comparing it with Christ's ministry.

(1.) That Christ far *exceeded* John Baptist's power, for *John did no miracle*, but Jesus doth many, whence it is easy to infer, that Jesus is greater than John. And if John were so great a prophet, how great then is this Jesus? Christ is best known and acknowledged by such a comparison with others, as sets him superlatively above others. Though John came in the spirit and power of Elias, yet he did not work miracles as Elias did, lest the minds of people should be made to hesitate between him and Jesus; therefore the honour of working miracles was reserved for Jesus, as a flower of his crown, that there might be a *sensible* demonstration, and an *undeniable* one, that though he came after John, yet he was *preferred far before him*.

(2.) That Christ exactly *answered* John Baptist's testimony. John not only *did no miracle* to divert people from Christ, but he said a great deal to *direct* them to Christ, and to turn them over as apprentices to him, and that came to their minds *now*; all things that *John said of this man were true*, that he should be the *Lamb of God*; should *baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire*. Great things John had said of him, which raised their expectations; so that though they had not zeal enough to carry them into his country, to enquire after him, yet when he came into *theirs*, and brought his gospel to their doors, they acknowledged him as great as John had said he would be. When we get acquainted with Christ, and come to know him experimentally, we find all things that the scripture saith of him to be *true*; nay, and that the reality exceeds the report, 1 Kings x. 6, 7. John Baptist was now dead and gone, and yet his hearers *profited* by what they had heard *formerly*, and by comparing what they heard then, with what they saw now, they gained a double advantage; for, (1.) They were confirmed in their belief that *John was a prophet*, who foretold such things, and spoke of the eminency to which this Jesus would arrive, though his beginning was so small. (2.) They were prepared to believe that *Jesus was the Christ*, in whom they saw those things accomplished which John foretold. By this we see, that the

success and efficacy of the word preached, is not confined to the life of the preacher, nor doth it expire with his breath, but that which seemed as *water spilt upon the ground*, may afterward be *gathered up again*. See Zech. i. 5, 6.

3. That many *believed on him* there. Believing that he who wrought such miracles, and in whom John's predictions were fulfilled, was what he declared himself to be, the Son of God, they gave up themselves to him as his disciples, ver. 42. An emphasis is here to be laid, (1.) Upon the *persons* that believed on him, they were *many*. While they that received and embraced his doctrine at Jerusalem were but as the grape-gleanings of the vintage, they that believed on him in the country beyond Jordan were a full harvest gathered in to him. (2.) Upon the *place* where this was, it was *there* where John had been preaching and baptizing, and had had great success, *there* many believed on the Lord Jesus. Where the preaching of the doctrine of repentance, has had success as desired, there the preaching of the doctrine of reconciliation and gospel grace is most likely to be prosperous. Where John has been acceptable, Jesus will not be unacceptable. The jubilee trumpet sounds sweetest in the ears of those, who in the day of atonement have afflicted their souls for sin.

## CHAP. XI.

In this chapter we have the history of that illustrious miracle which Christ wrought a little before his death, the raising of Lazarus to life; which is recorded only by this evangelist, for the other three confine themselves to what Christ did in Galilee, where he resided most, and scarce ever carried their history into Jerusalem till the passion week; whereas John's memoirs relate chiefly to what passed at Jerusalem; this passage therefore was reserved for his pen. Some suggest that when the other evangelists wrote, Lazarus was alive, and it would not well agree, either with his safety, or with his humility, to have it recorded till now, when it is supposed he was dead. It is more largely recorded than any other of Christ's miracles, yet not only because there are many circumstances of it so very instructive, and the miracle itself so very great a proof of Christ's mission, but because it was an earnest of that which was to be the crowning proof of all, Christ's own resurrection. Here is, (1.) The tidings sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, and his entertainment of those tidings, ver. 1—16. (2.) The visit he made to Lazarus's relations when he had heard of his death, and their entertainment of the visit, ver. 17—32. (3.) The miracle wrought in the raising of Lazarus from the dead, ver. 33—44. (4.) The effect wrought by this miracle upon others, ver. 45—57.

1. **N**OW a certain man was sick, named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2. (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick) 3. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest, is sick. 4. When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. 5. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. 6. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. 7. Then after that, saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. 8. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? 9. Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. 10. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. 11. These things said he: and after that, he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. 12. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 13. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 14. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15. And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there (to the intent ye may believe) nevertheless, let us go unto him. 16. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

We have in these verses.

1. A particular account of the parties principally concerned in this story, ver. 1, 2. (1.) They lived at Bethany, a village not far from Jerusalem, where Christ usually lodged when he came up to the feasts. It is here called the *town of Mary and Martha*, i. e. the town where they dwelt, as Bethsaida is called the *city of Andrew and Peter*, John i. 44. for I see no reason to think as some do, that Martha and Mary were owners of the town, and the rest were their tenants. (2.) Here was a brother named Lazarus; his Hebrew name probably was Eleazar; which being contracted, and a Greek



a Greek termination put to it, is made Lazarus. Perhaps in prospect of this history, our Saviour made use of the name of Lazarus in that parable wherein he designed to set forth the blessedness of the righteous in the bosom of Abraham immediately after death, *Luke xvi. 20.* (3.) Here were two sisters, Martha and Mary, who seem to have been the housekeepers, and to have managed the affairs of the family, while perhaps Lazarus lived a retired life, and gave himself to study and contemplation. Here was a decent, happy, well ordered family, and a family that Christ was very much conversant in, where yet there was neither husband nor wife, (for ought appears) but the house kept by a brother, and his sisters dwelling together in unity. (4.) One of the sisters is particularly described to be *that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment*, ver. 2. some think it was that woman that we read of, *Luke vii. 37, 38.* who had been a *sinner*, an *ill woman*. I rather think it refers to that anointing of Christ which this evangelist relates, *chap. xii. 3.* for the evangelists do never refer one to another, but John frequently refers in one place of his gospel to another. Extraordinary acts of piety and devotion that come from an honest principle of love to Christ, will not only find acceptance with him, but gain reputation in the church, *Mat. xxvi. 13.* This was the *whose brother Lazarus was sick*; and the sickness of those we love is our affliction. The more friends we have, the more frequently we are thus afflicted by sympathy; and the dearer they are, the more grievous it is. The multiplying of our comforts is but the multiplying of our cares and crosses.

2. The tidings that were sent to our Lord Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus, ver. 3. His sisters knew where Jesus was, a great way off beyond Jordan, and they sent a special messenger to him to acquaint him with the affliction of their family. In which they manifest, (1.) The affection and concern they had for their brother. Though it is likely his estate would come to them after his death, yet they earnestly desired his life, as they ought to do. They shewed their love to him now he was sick, for a *brother is born for adversity*, and so is a sister too. We must weep with our friends when they weep, as well as rejoice with them when they rejoice. (2.) The regard they had to the Lord Jesus, whom they were willing to make acquainted with all their concerns, and, like Jephthah, to utter all their words before him. Though God knows all our wants, and griefs, and cares, he will know them from us, and is honoured by our laying them before him.

The message they sent was very short, not *petitioning*, much less *prescribing* or *pressing*, but barely relating the case with the tender insinuation of a powerful plea, *Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.* They do not say, he whom *we* love, but whom *thou* lovest. Our greatest encouragements in prayer are fetched from God himself, and from his grace. They do not say, Lord, behold him *who loveth thee*, but whom *thou lovest*; for herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us: Our love to him is not worth speaking of, but his to us can never be enough spoken of. Note, 1. There are some of the friends and followers of the Lord Jesus whom he hath a special kindness for above others. Among the twelve there was one *whom Jesus loved*. 2. It is no new thing for those whom Christ loves to be sick; all things come alike to all; bodily distempers correct the corruptions, and try the graces of God's people. 3. It is a great comfort to us when we are sick to have those about us that will pray for us. 4. We have great encouragement in our prayers for those who are sick, if we have ground to hope that they are such as Christ loves; and we have reason to love and pray for those whom we have reason to think Christ loves and cares for.

3. An account how Christ entertained the tidings brought him of the illness of his friend.

1. He prognosticated the event and issue of the sickness, and probably sent it as a message to the sisters of Lazarus by the express, to support them while he delayed to come to them. Two things he prognosticates:

(1.) This *sickness is not unto death*, it was mortal, proved *fatal*, and no doubt but Lazarus was truly dead for four days. But, (1.) That was not the *errand* upon which this sickness was sent; it came not as in a common case to be a summons to the grave, but there was a further intention in it. Had it been sent on that errand, his *rising from the dead would have defeated it.* (2.) That was not the final effect of this sickness. He *died*, and yet it might be said he did not *die*, for *factum non dicitur quod non perseverat.* Death is an everlasting farewell to this world, it is the way whence we shall not return; and in this sense it was *not unto death.* The grave was not his *long home*, his *house of eternity.* Thus Christ said of the maid, whom he purposed to restore to life, *She is not dead.* The sickness of good people, how threatening soever, is *not unto death*, for it is not to *eternal death.* The body's death to this world is the soul's birth into another world; when we or our friends are sick, we make it our principal support, that there is hopes of a recovery, but in that we may be disappointed, therefore it is our wisdom to build upon that in which we cannot be disappointed; if they belong to Christ, let the worst come to the worst, they cannot be *hurt of the second death*, and then not much hurt of the first.

(2.) But it is *for the glory of God*, that an opportunity may be given for the manifesting of God's glorious power. The afflictions of the saints are designed for the glory of God, that he may have opportunity of shewing them favour, for the sweetest mercies, and the most affecting are those which are occasioned by trouble. Let this reconcile us to the darkest dispensations of providence, they are

all for the glory of God, this sickness, this loss, this disappointment is so; and if God be glorified, we ought to be satisfied, *Lev. x. 3.* It was for the glory of God, for it was *that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*, as it gave him occasion to work that glorious miracle, the *raising him from the dead.* As before the man was *born blind*, that Christ might have the honour of curing him, *John ix. 3.* so Lazarus must be sick, and die, that Christ may be glorified as the Lord of life. Let this comfort those whom Christ loves under all their grievances, that the design of them all is, that *the Son of God may be glorified thereby*, his wisdom, power, and goodness, glorified in supporting and relieving them; see *2 Cor. xii. 9, 10.*

2. He deferred visiting his patient, ver. 5, 6. They had pleaded, *Lord, it is he whom thou lovest*, and the plea is allowed, ver. 5. *Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus.* Thus the claims of faith are ratified in the court of heaven; now one would think it should follow, *when he heard therefore that he was sick*, he made all the haste that he could to him; if he loved them, now was a time to shew it by hastening to them, for he knew they impatiently expected him. But he took the contrary way to shew his love; it is not said, he loved them, and yet he lingered, but he loved them, and therefore he lingered, when he heard his friend was sick, instead of coming post to him, he abode *two days still in the same place where he was.* (1.) He loved them, i. e. had a great opinion of Martha and Mary, of their wisdom and grace, of their faith and patience, above others of his disciples, and therefore he deferred coming to them, that he might try them, that their trial might at last be found to praise and honour. (2.) He loved them, i. e. he designed to do something great and extraordinary for them, to work such a miracle for their relief, as he had not wrought for any of his friends; and therefore he delayed coming to them, that Lazarus might be *dead and buried* before he came. If Christ had come presently, and cured the sickness of Lazarus, he had done no more than he did for many, if he had raised him to life when newly dead, no more than he had done for some, but deferring his relief so long, he had an opportunity of doing more for him than for any. Note, God hath gracious intentions even in seeming delays, *Isa. liv. 7, 8.* — *xlix. 14.* Christ's friends at Bethany were not out of his thoughts, though when he heard of their distress, he made no haste to them. When the work of deliverance, temporal or spiritual, publick or personal, stands at a stay, it doth but stay the time, and *every thing is beautiful in its season.*

4. The discourse he had with his disciples, when he was about to go visit his friends at Bethany, ver. 7—16. And the conference is so very free and familiar, as to make out what Christ saith, *I have called you friends.*

Two things he discourses about, his own *danger*, and Lazarus's death.

First, His own *danger* in going into Judea, ver. 7—10.

1. Here is the notice which Christ gave his disciples of his purpose to go into Judea towards Jerusalem. His disciples were the men of his counsel, and to them he saith, ver. 7. *Let us go into Judea again*, though they there are unworthy of such a favour. Thus Christ repeats the tenders of his mercy to those that have oft rejected them. Now this may be considered, (1.) As a purpose of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, whose affliction, and all the aggravating circumstances of it he knew very well, though no more expresses were sent to him; for he was present in spirit, though absent in body. When he knew they were brought to the last extremity, when the brother and sisters have given and taken a final farewell; now, saith he, let us go to Judea. Christ will arise in favour of his people, when *the time to favour them, yea the set time, is come*, and the worst time is commonly the set time. When *our hope is lost, we are cut off for our part*, then they shall know that *I am the Lord*, when *I have opened the grave*, Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 13. In the depths of affliction, let this therefore keep us out of the depths of despair, that man's extremity is God's opportunity, *Jehovah-jireh.* Or, (2.) As a trial of the courage of the disciples, whether they would venture to follow him thither, where they had so lately been frightened with an attempt upon their Master's life, which they looked upon as an attempt upon theirs too. To go to Judea, which was so lately made *too hot* for them, was a saying that *proved them.* But Christ did not say, *Go ye into Judea*, and I will stay and take shelter here; no, *Let us go.* Note, Christ never brings his people into any peril, but he accompanies them in it; and is with them, even then when they *walk through the valley of the shadow of death.*

2. Their objection against this journey, ver. 18. *Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?* Here, 1. They mind him of the danger he had been in there not long since. Christ's disciples are apt to make a greater matter of sufferings than their Master doth, and to remember injuries longer. He had put up the affront, it was over and gone, and forgotten, but his disciples could not forget it, *of late, now, now*, as if it were this very day, they *sought to stone thee.* Though it was at least two months ago, the remembrance of the fright was fresh in their minds. 2. They marvel he will *go thither again.* Wilt thou favour those with thy presence, that have expelled thee out of their coasts? Christ's ways in passing by offences are *above our ways.* Wilt thou expose thyself among a people that are so desperately enraged against thee? *Goest thou thither again*, where thou hast been so ill used? Here they shewed great care for their Master's safety, as Peter did, when he said, *Master, spare thyself*; had Christ been minded to shift



off suffering, he did not want friends to persuade him to it; but he had opened his mouth to the Lord, and he would not, he could not, go back. Yet while the disciples shew a concern for his safety, they discover at the same time, (1.) A distrust of his power; as if he could not secure both himself and them now in Judea, as well as he had done formerly. Is his arm waxen short? When we are solicitous for the interests of Christ's church and kingdom in the world, yet we must rest satisfied in the wisdom and power of the Lord Jesus, who knows how to secure a flock of sheep in the midst of a herd of wolves. (2.) A secret fear of suffering themselves, for they count upon that if he suffer. When our own private interests happen to run in the same channel with the publick, we are apt to think ourselves zealous for the Lord of hosts, when really we are only jealous for our own wealth, credit, ease, and safety, and seek our own things, under colour and umbrage of seeking the things of Christ, we have therefore need nicely to distinguish upon our principles.

3. Christ's answer to this objection, ver. 9, 10. *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* The Jews divided every day into twelve hours, and made their hours longer or shorter, according as the days were, so that an hour with them was a twelfth part of the time between sun and sun; so some. Or, they lying much more south than we, their days were nearer twelve hours long than ours. The divine providence has given us day-light to work by, and lengthens it out to a competent time; and reckoning the year round, every country has just as much day-light as night, and so much more as the twilights amount to. Man's life is a day, this day is divided into divers ages, states, and opportunities, as into hours, shorter or longer, as God has appointed; the consideration of this should make us not only very busy, as to the work of life, if there were twelve hours in the day, each of them ought to be filled up with duty, and none of them trifled away, but also very easy as to the perils of life; our day shall be lengthened out till our work be done, and our testimony finished. This Christ applies to his case, and shews why he must go to Judea, because he had a clear call to go. For the opening of this,

1. He shews the comfort and satisfaction which a man has in his own mind, while he keeps in the way of his duty, as it is in general prescribed by the word of God, and particularly determined by the providence of God. *If any man walk in the day, he stumbles not*; that is, if a man keep close to his duty, and mind that, and set the will of God before him as his rule, with an impartial respect to all God's commandments, he doth not hesitate in his own mind, but walking uprightly walks surely, and with a holy confidence. As he that walks in the day stumbles not, but goes on steadily and cheerfully in his way, because he sees the light of this world, and by it sees his way before him; so a good man, without any collateral security, or sinister aims, relies upon the word of God as his rule, and regards the glory of God as his end, because he sees those two great lights, and keeps his eye upon them, he is furnished with a faithful guide in all his doubts, and a powerful guard in all his dangers, Gal. vi. 4. Psal. cxix. 6. Christ, wherever he went, walked in the day, and so shall we, if we follow his steps.

2. He shews the pain and peril a man is in, who walks not according to this rule, ver. 10. *If a man walk in the night, he stumbles.* If a man walk in the way of his heart, and the sight of his eyes, and according to the course of this world, if he consult his own carnal reasonings more than the will and glory of God, he falls into temptations and snares, is liable to great uneasinesses, and frightful apprehensions; trembles at the shaking of a leaf, and flees when none pursues, while an upright man laughs at the shaking of a spear, and stands undaunted when ten thousand invade. See Psal. xxxiii. 14, 15, 16. He stumbles, because there is no light in him, for light in us is that to our moral actions, which light about us is to our natural actions. He has not a good principle within; he is not sincere; his eye is evil. Thus Christ not only justifies his purpose of going into Judea, but encourageth his disciples to go along with him, and fear no evil.

Secondly, The death of Lazarus is here discoursed of between Christ and his disciples, ver. 11, 16. Where we have,

1. The notice Christ gave his disciples of the death of Lazarus, and an intimation that his business into Judea was to look after him, ver. 11. After he had prepared his disciples for this dangerous march into an enemy's country, he then gives them,

1. Plain intelligence of the death of Lazarus, though he had received no advice of it, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth*. See here how Christ calls a believer, and a believer's death. 1. He calls a believer his friend; *Our friend Lazarus*. Note, (1.) There is a covenant of friendship between Christ and believers, and a friendly affection and communion pursuant to it, which our Lord Jesus will own and not be ashamed of. *His secret is with the righteous*. (2.) Those whom Christ is pleased to own as his friends, all his disciples should make for theirs. Christ speaks of Lazarus as their common friend: *Our friend*. (3.) Death itself doth not break the bond of friendship between Christ and a believer. Lazarus is dead, and yet he is still *our friend*. 2. He calls the death of a believer a sleep; *he sleepeth*. It is good to call death by such names and titles as will help to make it more familiar, and less formidable to us. The death of Lazarus was in a peculiar sense a sleep, as that of Jairus's daughter, because they were to be raised again speedily; and since we are sure to rise again, at last, why should that make any great difference? And why should not the believing hope of that resurrection to eternal life, make it upon this matter as easy to us to put off the body and

die, as it is to put off our clothes and go sleep? A good Christian, when he dies, doth but sleep: he rests from the labours of the day past, and is refreshing himself for the next morning. Nay, herein death has the advantage of sleep, that sleep is only the parenthesis, but death is the period of our care and toils. The soul doth not sleep, but becomes more active; but the body sleeps without any toils, without any terror; not distempered nor disturbed. The grave to the wicked is a prison, and its grave-clothes as the shackles of a criminal reserved for execution; but to the godly it is a bed, and all its bands as the soft and downy fetters of an easy, quiet sleep. Though the body corrupt, it will rise in the morning as if it had never seen corruption; it is but putting off our clothes to be mended and trimmed up for the marriage-day, the coronation-day, to which we must rise. See Isa. lvii. 2. 1 Thes. iv. 14. The Greeks called their burying-places, *dormitories*, κοιμητήρια.

2. Particular intimations of his favourable intentions concerning Lazarus; but *I go that I may awake him out of sleep*. He could have done it and yet have staid where he was; he that recovered at a distance one dying, John iv. 50. could have raised at a distance one dead; but he would put this honour upon the miracle to work it by the grave side, *I go to awake him*. As sleep is a resemblance of death, so a man's waking out of sleep when he is called, especially when he is called by his own name, is an emblem of the resurrection, Job xiv. 14. *Then shalt thou call*. Christ had no sooner said our friend sleeps, but presently he adds, *I go that I may awake him*. When Christ tells his people at any time how bad the case is, he lets them know in the same breath how easily, how quickly he can mend it. Christ's telling his disciples that this was his business to Judea, might help to take off their fear of going with him thither; he did not go upon a publick errand to the temple, but a private visit, which would not so much expose him and them; and besides, it was to do a kindness to a family they were all obliged to.

2. Their mistake of the meaning of this notice, and the blunder they made about it, ver. 12, 13. They said, *Lord, if he sleep he shall do well*. This speaks,

(1.) Some concern they had for their friend Lazarus, they hoped he would recover, *σωθήσεται*, He shall be saved from dying at this time. Probably they had understood by the messenger who brought news of his illness, that one of the most threatening symptoms he was under, was, that he was restless, and could get no sleep; and now they heard he slept they concluded the fever was going off, and the worst was past. Sleep is often nature's physick, and reviving to its weak and weary powers. This is true of the sleep of death; if a good Christian so sleep, he shall do well, better than he did here.

(2.) Yet it speaks a greater concern for themselves, for hereby they insinuate that it was now needless for him to go to him, and expose himself and them. If he sleep he will be quickly well, and we may stay where we are. Thus we are willing to hope that good work which we are called to do will do itself, or will be done by some other hand, if there be peril in the doing of it.

This mistake of theirs is here rectified, ver. 13. *Jesus spake of his death*. See here, 1. How dull of understanding Christ's disciples as yet were. Let us not therefore condemn all those for hereticks who mistake the sense of some of Christ's sayings. It is not good to aggravate our brethren's mistakes, yet this was a gross one; for it had easily been prevented, if they had remembered how frequently death is called a sleep in the Old Testament. They should have understood Christ when he spoke scripture-language. Besides, it would sound odd for their Master to undertake a journey of two or three days only to awake a friend out of a natural sleep, which any one else might awake him out of. What Christ undertakes to do we may be sure is something great and uncommon, and a work worthy of himself. 2. How carefully the evangelist corrects this error, *Jesus spake of his death*. Those that speak in an unknown tongue, or use similitudes, should learn hence to explain themselves, and pray that they may interpret to prevent mistakes.

3. The plain and express declaration which Jesus made to them of the death of Lazarus, and his resolution to go to Bethany, ver. 14, 15.

(1.) He gives them notice of the death of Lazarus, what he had before said darkly he now saith plainly, and without a figure, *Lazarus is dead*, ver. 14. Christ takes cognizance of the death of his saints, for it is precious in his sight, Psal. cxvi. 15. and is not pleased if we do not consider it, and lay it to heart. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how he condescends to those that are out of the way; and by his subsequent sayings and doings explains the difficulties of what went before.

(2.) He gives them the reason why he had delayed so long to go and see him, *I am glad for your sakes that I was not there*. If he had been there time enough he would have healed his disease, and prevented his death, which would have been much for the comfort of Lazarus's friends, but then his disciples would have seen no further proof of his power than what they had often seen, and consequently their faith had received no improvement; but now he went and raised him from the dead, as there were many brought to believe on him who before did not, ver. 45. so there was much done towards the perfecting of what was lacking in the faith of those that did, which Christ aimed at, *to the intent that ye may believe*.

(3.) He resolves now to go to Bethany, and take his disciples along with him, *Let us go unto him*. Not let us go to his sisters to comfort



comfort them, which is the utmost we can do, but let us go to him; for Christ can *show wonders to the dead*. Death, which will separate us from all our other friends, and cut us off from correspondence with them, yet cannot separate us from the love of Christ, nor put us out of the reach of his calls; as he will maintain his *covenant with the dust*, so he can make visits to the dust. *Lazarus is dead*, but let us go to him, though, perhaps, those who said, if he sleep, there is no need to go, were ready to say, if he be dead it is to no purpose to go.

4. Thomas exciting his fellow-disciples, cheerfully to attend their Master's motions, *ver. 16. Thomas, which is called Didymus*. Thomas in Hebrew, and Didymus in Greek, signify a twin; it is said of Rebekah, *Gen. xxv. 24.* that there were twins in her womb. The word is *Thomim*; probably Thomas was a twin; he said to his fellow-disciples, who probably looked with fear and concern upon one another, when Christ said so positively, *Let us go to him*; he said very courageously, *Let us also go, that we may die with him*. With him. That is,

1. With Lazarus, who was now dead; so some take it. Lazarus was a dear and loving friend both to Christ and his disciples, and perhaps Thomas had a particular intimacy with him. Now if he be dead, saith he, *Let us even go and die with him*. For, (1.) If we survive, we know not how to live without him. Probably Lazarus had done them many good offices, sheltered them, and provided for them, and been to them *instead of eyes*; and now he was gone, they had *no man like minded*, and therefore, saith he, we had as good die with him. Thus we are sometimes ready to think our lives bound up in the lives of some that were dear to us; but God will teach us to live, and to live comfortably upon himself, when those are gone whom we thought we could not have lived without. But that is not all. (2.) If we die, we hope to be *happy with him*. Such a firm belief he has of a happiness on the other side death, and such good hope through grace of their own and Lazarus's interest in it, that he is willing they should all go and *die with him*. It is better die and go along with our Christian friends, to that world which is enriched by their removal to it, than stay behind in a world that is impoverished by their departure out of it. The more of our friends are translated hence, the fewer cords we have to bind us to this earth, and the more to draw our hearts heaven-wards. How pleasantly doth the good man speak of dying, as if it were but *undressing and going to bed*.

2. Let us go and die with our Master, who is now exposing himself to death by venturing into Judea, and so I rather think it is meant. If he will go into danger, let us also go and take our lot with him, according to the command we received, *follow me*. Thomas knew so much of the malice of the Jews against him, and the counsels of God concerning him, which he had often told them of, that it was no foreign supposition that he was now going to die. And now Thomas discovers, (1.) A gracious readiness to die with Christ himself, flowing from strong affections to him, though his faith was weak, as appeared afterward, *chap. xiv. 5.—xx. 25. Where thou diest I will die*, *Ruth i. 17.* (2.) A zealous desire to help his fellow-disciples into the same frame, *Let us go*, one and all, and *die with him*; if they stone him, let them stone us; who would desire to survive such a master? Thus, in difficult times, Christians should animate one another. We may each of us say, *Let us die with him*. Note, the consideration of the dying of the Lord Jesus should make us willing to die whenever God calls for us.

17. Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. 18. (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off) 19. And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 20. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. 21. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22. But I know, that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. 23. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; 26. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? 27. She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. 28. And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. 29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. 30. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave, to weep there. 32. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

The matter being determined that Christ will go to Judea, and his disciples with him, they address themselves to their journey; and in this journey some passages happened, which the other evangelists record, as the healing of the blind man at Jericho, and the conversion of Zaccheus. We must not reckon ourselves out of our way, while we are in the way of doing good; nor be so intent upon one good office as to neglect another.

At length he comes near to Bethany, which is said to be about fifteen furlongs off from Jerusalem, about two measured miles, *ver. 18.* Notice is taken of this, that this miracle was in effect wrought in Jerusalem, and so was put to her score. Christ's miracles in Galilee were more numerous, but those in or near Jerusalem were more illustrious; there he healed one that had been diseased thirty-eight years, another that had been blind from his birth, and raised one that had been dead four days. To Bethany Christ came, and observe,

First, What posture he found his friends there in. When he had been last with them, it is likely he left them well, in health and joy; but when we part from our friends (though Christ knows) we know not what changes may be concerning us or them before we meet again.

1. He found his friend Lazarus in the grave, *ver. 17.* When he came near the town, probably by the burying place belonging to the town, he was told by the neighbours, or some he met, that Lazarus had been four days buried. Some think Lazarus died the same day that the messenger came to Jesus with the tidings of his sickness, and so reckon two days for his abode in the same place, and two days for his journey. I rather think that Lazarus died at that very instant that Jesus said, *Our friend sleepeth*, he is now newly fallen asleep; and the time between his death and burial (which among the Jews was but short) with the four days of his lying in the grave were taken up in this journey; for Christ travelled publicly, as appears by his passing through Jericho, and his abode at Zaccheus's house took up some time. Promised salvations, though they always come surely, yet they often come slowly.

2. He found his friends that survived in grief. Martha and Mary were almost swallowed up with sorrow for the death of their brother, which is intimated, where it is said, that many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them. Note, 1. Ordinarily where death is there are mourners, especially when those that were agreeable and amiable to their relations, and serviceable to their generation, are taken away. The house where death is, is called the house of mourning, *Eccl. vii. 2.* When man goes to his long home, the mourners go about the streets, *Eccl. xii. 5.* or rather sit alone, and keep silence. Here was Martha's house, a house where the fear of God was, and on which his blessing rested, yet made a house of mourning. Grace will keep sorrow from the heart, *John xiv. 1.* not from the house. 2. Where there are mourners there ought to be comforters. It is a duty we owe to those that are in sorrow, to mourn with them, and to comfort them; and our mourning with them will be some comfort to them. When we are under the present impressions of grief, we are apt to forget those things which would minister comfort to us, and therefore have need of remembrancers: It is a mercy to have such when we are in sorrow, and our duty to be such to them who are in sorrow. The Jewish doctors laid great stress upon this, obliging their disciples to make conscience of comforting the mourners after the burial of the dead. They comforted them concerning their brother, i. e. by speaking to them of him, not only of the good name he left behind, but the happy state he was gone to. When godly relations and friends are taken from us, whatever occasion we have to be afflicted concerning ourselves, who are left behind, and miss them, we have reason to be comforted concerning them who are gone before us to a happiness where they have no miss of us.

This visit which the Jews made to Martha and Mary is an evidence that they were persons of distinction, and made a figure; as also that they carried themselves obligingly to all; so that though they were followers of Christ, yet those that had no respect for him, were civil to them. There was also a providence in it, that so many Jews, Jewish ladies, it is probable, should come together just at this time to comfort the mourners, that they might be unexceptionable witnesses of the miracle; and see what miserable comforters they were in comparison with Christ. Christ did not use to send for witnesses to his miracles, and yet if none were by but relations, it would have been accepted against, therefore God's counsel so ordered it, that these should come together accidentally to bear their testimony to it, that all infidelity might stop her mouth.

Secondly, What passed between him and his surviving friends at this interview. When Christ defers his visits for a time, they are thereby made the more acceptable, much the more welcome; so it was here: His departures endear his returns, and his absence teacheth us how to value his presence.

1. We have here the interview between him and Martha; she went and met him, *ver. 20.*

1. It should seem that Martha was earnestly expecting Christ's arrival, and enquiring for it: Either she had sent out messengers to bring her tidings of his first approach, or she had so often asked, *saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* That the first who discovered him ran to her with the welcome news. However it was, she heard of his coming before he was come. She had waited long, and often asked, *Is he come?* And could hear no tidings of him; but long looked for came at last: At the end the vision will speak and not lye.



2. Martha, when the good news brought that Jesus was coming, threw all aside, and *went and met him*, in token of a most affectionate welcome. She waved all ceremony and compliment to the Jews who came to visit her, and hastened to go *meet Jesus*. Note, When God by his grace or providence is coming towards us in ways of mercy and comfort, we should go forth by faith, hope, and prayer, to meet him. Some suggest that Martha went out of the town to meet Jesus, to let him know that there were several Jews in the house who were no friends to him, that if he pleased, he might keep out of the way of them.

3. When Martha went to meet Jesus, *Mary sat still in the house*. Some think she did not hear the tidings, being in her withdrawing-room, receiving visits of condolence, while Martha, who was busied in the household-affairs, had early notice of it. Perhaps Martha would not tell her sister that Christ was coming, being ambitious of the honour of receiving him first. *Sancta est prudentia clam fratribus clam parentibus ad Christum sese conferre*. Maldonat. in loc. Others think she did hear that Christ was come, but was so overwhelmed with sorrow, that she did not care for stirring, chusing rather to indulge her sorrow, and to sit poring upon her affliction, and saying, *I do well to mourn*. Comparing this story, with that, *Luke x. 38, 39*. we may observe the different tempers of these two sisters, and the temptations and advantages of each; Martha's natural temper was active and busy, she loved to be here and there, and at the end of every thing, and this had been a snare to her, when by it she was not only careful, and cumbered about many things, but hindered from the exercises of devotion; but now in a day of affliction, this active temper did her a kindness, kept the grief from her heart, and made her forward to meet Christ, and so she received comfort from him the sooner. On the other hand, Mary's natural temper was *contemplative* and reserved; this had been formerly an advantage to her, when it set her at Christ's feet to hear his word, and enabled her there to attend upon him without those distractions which Martha was cumbered with: But now, in the day of affliction, that same temper proved a snare to her, and made her less able to grapple with her grief, and disposed her to melancholy; but *Mary sat still in the house*. See here how much it will be our wisdom carefully to watch against the temptations, and improve the advantages of our natural temper.

Here is fully related the discourse between Christ and Martha.

First, Martha's address to Christ, *ver. 21, 22*.

1. She complains of Christ's long absence and delay. She said it, not only with grief for the death of her brother, but some resentment of the seeming unkindness of the Master; *Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died*. Here is, 1. Some evidence of faith. She believed Christ's power, that though her brother's sickness was very grievous, yet he could have cured it, and so have prevented his death; she believed his pity, that if he had but seen Lazarus in his extreme illness, and his dear relations all in tears about him, he would have had compassion, and have prevented so sad a breach, for his compassions fail not. But, 2. Here are sad instances of unbelief. Her faith was true, but weak as a bruised reed, for she limits the power of Christ, in saying, *If thou hadst been here*; whereas she ought to have known that Christ could cure at a distance, and his gracious operations are not limited to his bodily presence. She reflects likewise upon the wisdom and kindness of Christ, that he did not hasten to them when they sent for him, as if he had not *timed his business* well, and now might as good have staid away, and not have come at all as come too late; and as for any help now, she can scarce entertain the thought of it.

2. Yet she corrects, and comforts herself with the thoughts of the prevailing interest Christ had in heaven, however she blames herself for blaming her Master, and for suggesting that he comes too late, for *I know that even now*, as desperate as the case is, *whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee*. Observe, 1. How willing her hope was. Though she has not courage to ask of Jesus that he should raise him to life again, there having been no precedent as yet of any one raised to life that had been so long dead, yet, like a modest petitioner, she humbly recommends the case to the wise and compassionate consideration of the Lord Jesus. When we know not what in particular to ask or expect, let us in general refer ourselves to God, let him do as seemeth him good. *Judicii tui est, non præsumptionis meæ*. Aug. in loc. When we know not what to pray for, it is our comfort that the great Intercessor knows what to ask for us, and is always heard. 2. How weak her faith was. She should have said, Lord, thou canst do whatsoever thou wilt, but she only faith, thou canst obtain whatever thou prayest for; she had forgot that the Son has life in himself, that he wrought miracles by his own power. Yet both these considerations must be taken in for the encouragement of our faith and hope, and neither excluded; the dominion Christ has on earth, and his interest and intercession in heaven: He has in the one hand the golden scepter, and in the other the golden censer; his power always predominant, his intercession always prevalent.

Secondly, The comfortable word which Christ gave to Martha, in answer to her pathetic address, *ver. 23*. *Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again*. Martha in her complaint looked back, reflecting with regret, that Christ was not there, for then, thinks she, my brother had been now alive: we are apt, in such cases, to add to our own trouble, by fancying what *might have been*. If such a method had been taken, such a physician employed, my friend had not died, which is more than we know; but what good doth this do, when God's will is done, and our business is to sub-

mit to it; but Christ directs Martha, and us in her, to look forwards, and to think what *shall be*, for that is a certainty, and yields sure comfort, *Thy brother shall rise again*.

1. This was true of Lazarus in a sense peculiar to him; he was now presently to be raised, but Christ speaks of it in general as a thing to be done, not which he himself would do, so humbly did our Lord Jesus speak of what he did. He also expresseth it *ambiguously*, leaving her uncertain at first, whether he would raise him presently, or not till the last day, that he might try her faith and patience.

2. It is applicable to all the saints, and their resurrection at the last day. Note, It is matter of comfort to us when we have buried our godly friends and relations, to think that they shall *rise again*. As the soul at death is not *lost* but *gone before*, so the body is not *lost* but *laid up*. Think we hear Christ saying, thy parent, thy child, thy yoke-fellow, shall rise again; *these dry bones shall live*.

Thirdly, The faith which Martha mixed with this word, and the unbelief mixed with this faith, *ver. 24*.

1. She accounted it a *faithful saying*, that *he shall rise again at the last day*. Though the doctrine of the resurrection was to have its full proof from Christ's resurrection, yet as it was already revealed, she firmly believed it, *Acts xxiv. 15*. (1.) That there shall be a *last day*, with which all the days of time shall be numbered and finished. (2.) That there shall be a *general* resurrection at that day, when the earth and sea shall give up their dead. (3.) There shall be a *particular* resurrection of each one. I know that *I shall rise again*, and this and the other relation that was dear to me. As bone shall return to his bone in that day, so friend to his friend.

2. Yet she seems to think this saying not so well worthy of all acceptance as really it was. *I know he shall rise again at the last day*, but what are we the better for that now? As if the comforts of the resurrection to eternal life were not worth speaking of, or yielded no satisfaction sufficient to balance her affliction. See our weakness and folly, that we suffer present, sensible things to make a deeper impression upon us, both of grief and joy, than those things which are the objects of faith. *I know that he shall rise again at the last day*; and is not that enough? She seems not to think it is. Thus by our discontent under present crosses, we greatly undervalue our future hopes, and put a slight upon them, as if not worth regarding.

Fourthly, The further instruction and encouragement which Jesus Christ gave her; for he will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. He said to her, *I am the resurrection and the life*, *ver. 25, 26*. Two things Christ possesseth her with the belief of, in reference to the present distress, and they are the things which our faith should fasten upon in the like cases.

1. The *power of Christ*, his sovereign power; *I am the resurrection and the life*, the fountain of life, and the head and author of the resurrection. Martha believed that at his prayer God would give any thing, but he would have her know that by his word he could *work* any thing. Martha believed a resurrection at the *last day*, Christ tells her that he had that power lodged in his own hand, that the dead were to *hear his voice*, *John v. 25*. whence it was easy to infer, he that could raise a world of men that had been dead many ages, could doubtless raise one man that had been dead but *four days*. Note, It is an unspeakable comfort to all good Christians, that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life, and will be so to them. *Resurrection* is a return to life, Christ is the author of that return, and of that life to which it is a return. We look for the *resurrection of the dead*, and the *life of the world to come*, and Christ is both; the author and principle of both, and the ground of our hope of both.

2. The promises of the new covenant, which give us further ground of hope that *we shall live*. Observe,

1. *To whom* these promises are made, to them that believe in Jesus Christ, to that *consent* to, and *confide* in Jesus Christ as the only Mediator of reconciliation, and communion between God and man; that receive the record God has given in his word concerning his Son, sincerely comply with it, and answer all the great intentions of it. The condition of the latter promise is thus expressed, *Whoever liveth and believeth in me*, which may be understood, either, 1. Of *natural* life, *whoever lives in this world*, whether he be Jew or Gentile, wherever he lives, if he believe in Christ he shall live by him. Yet it limits the time, whoever, during *life*, while he is here in this state of probation *believes in me*, shall be happy in me, but after death it will be too late; whoever *lives and believes*, i. e. lives by faith, *Gal. ii. 20*. has a faith that influences his conversation. Or, 2. Of *spiritual* life, He that *lives and believes*, is he that by faith is born again to a heavenly and divine life, to whom to *live is Christ*, that makes Christ the life of his soul.

2. What the promises are, *ver. 25*. *Though he die, yet shall he live*, nay, *ver. 26*. *He shall never die*. Man consists of body and soul, and provision is made for the happiness of both.

1. For the *body*, here is the promise of a *blessed resurrection*. Though the body be dead because of sin, there is no remedy, but it will die, yet it *shall live again, though he were dead*. All the difficulties that attend the state of the dead are here over-looked, and made nothing of. Though the sentence of death was just, though the effects of death be dismal, though the bands of death be strong, though he be dead and buried, dead and putrefied; though the scattered dust be so mixed with common dust, that no art of man can distinguish, much less separate them, put the case as strongly as you will



will on that side, yet we are sure *he shall live again*; the body shall be raised a glorious body.

2. For the *soul* here is the promise of a *blessed immortality*. He that *liveth and believeth*, who being united to Christ by faith, lives spiritually by virtue of that union, he shall *never die*: That spiritual life shall never be extinguished, but perfected in eternal life. As the soul being in its nature *spiritual*, is therefore *immortal*; so if by faith it live a *spiritual* life, consonant to its nature, its felicity shall be immortal too. It shall *never die*, shall never be otherwise but easy and happy, and there is not any intercession or interruption of its life, as there is of the life of the body: The *mortality* of the body shall at length be *swallowed up of life*, but the life of the soul, the believing soul, shall be immediately at death swallowed up of immortality. *He shall not die, eis t̃ aiōna, for ever. Non morietur in æternum*, so Cyprian quotes it. The body shall not be *for ever* dead in the grave, it dies (like the two witnesses) but for a *time, times, and the dividing of time*; and when time shall be no more, and all the divisions of it shall be numbered and finished, a *spirit of life from God shall enter into it*. But that is not all, the soul shall not die that death which is *for ever*, shall not die eternally. *Blessed and holy*, that is, blessed and happy is he, that by faith *has part in the first resurrection*, has part in Christ who is that resurrection; for as such the *second death*, which is a death for ever, shall have no power; see *John vi. 40*.

Christ asks her, *believest thou this?* Canst thou assent to it with application? Canst thou take my word for it? Note, When we have read or heard the word of Christ concerning the great things of the other world, we should seriously put it to ourselves, *Do we believe this?* This truth in particular, *this* which is attended with so many difficulties, *this* which is suited to my case? Doth my belief of it realize it to me, and give my soul an assurance of it? So that I can say, not only *this*, I believe, but *thus*, I believe it. Martha was doting upon her brother's being raised to live in this world, before Christ gave her hopes of that, he directed her thoughts to another life, another world; no matter for *that*, but *believest thou this* that I tell thee concerning the *future state*? The crosses and comforts of this present time, would not make that impression upon us that they do, if we did not believe the things of eternity as we ought.

Fifthly, Martha's unfeigned assent yielded to what Christ said, *ver. 27*. We have here Martha's creed, the good confession she witnessed, the same with that for which Peter was commended, *Matt. xvi. 16, 17*. and it is the *conclusion of the whole matter*.

1. Here is the *guide of her faith*, and that is, the *word of Christ*; without any alteration, exception, or proviso, she takes it entire as Christ had said it, *Yea, Lord*, whereby she subscribes to the truth of all and every part of that which Christ had promised, in his own sense; *even so*. Faith is an *echo* to divine revelation, returns the *same words*, and resolves to abide by them, *yea, Lord, As the word did make it, so I believe and take it*, said queen Elizabeth.

2. The ground of her faith, and that is, the authority of Christ; she therefore believes *this*, because she believes that he who saith it is Christ. She has recourse to the foundation, for the support of the superstructure. *I believe, πεπιστευκα, I have believed*, that thou art Christ, and therefore *I do believe this*. Observe here,

(1.) What she believed and confessed concerning Jesus; three things all to the same effect. (1.) That he was the *Christ*, or Messiah promised and expected, under this name and notion, the *anointed One*. (2.) That he was the *Son of God*, so the Messiah was called, *Psal. ii. 7*. not by office only, but by nature. (3.) That it was *he which should come* into the world, the *ἐρχόμενος*, that blessing of blessings which the church had for so many ages waited for as *future*, she embraced as *present*.

(2.) What she inferred hence, and what she alledged this for; if she admits this, that Jesus is the Christ, there is no difficulty in believing that he is the resurrection and the life, for if he be the Christ, then, (1.) He is the fountain of *light and truth*, and we may take all his sayings for faithful and divine, upon his own word. If he be the Christ, he is that prophet whom we are to hear in *all things*. (2.) He is the fountain of *life and blessedness*, and we may therefore depend upon his ability as well as upon his veracity. How shall bodies turned to dust, *live again*? How shall souls, clogged and clouded as ours are, *live for ever*? We could not believe this, but that we believe him that undertakes it to be *the Son of God*, who has life in himself, and has it for us.

2. We have here the interview between Christ and Mary, the other sister. And there observe,

1. The notice which Martha gave her of Christ's coming, *ver. 28*. *When she had so said*, as one that needed to say no more, *she went her way*, easy in her mind, and called Mary her sister. (1.) Martha having received instruction and comfort from Christ herself, called her sister to share with her. Time was when Martha would have drawn Mary from Christ to come help her in *much serving*, *Luke x. 40*. but to make her amends for that, here she is industrious to draw her to Christ. (2.) She called her *secretly*, and whispered it in her ear, because there was company by, Jews that were no friends to Christ. The saints are called *into the fellowship of Jesus Christ*, by an invitation that is secret and distinguishing, given to them, and not to others; they have meat to eat, that the world knows not of, joy that a stranger doth not intermeddle with. (3.) She called her by order from Christ, he bid her, *Go call her sister*. The call, that is *effectual*, whoever brings it, it is Christ that sends it. *The Master is come, and calleth for thee*. (1.) She calls Christ the

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*Master*; διδάσκαλος, a *teaching master*; by that title he was commonly called and known among them. Mr. George Herbert took pleasure in calling Christ, *my Master*. (2.) She triumphs in his arrival; the *Master is come*. He whom we have long wished and waited for, *He is come, he is come*; this was the best cordial in the present distress; Lazarus is gone, and our comfort in him *gone*, but the *Master is come*, who is better than the dearest friend, and has that in him which will abundantly make up all our losses. He is come, who is our *teacher*, who will teach us how to get good by our sorrow, *Psal. xciv. 17*. who will *teach*, and so comfort. (3.) She invites her sister to go meet him; he *calls for thee*, enquires what is become of thee, and would have thee sent for. Note, When Christ our Master comes, he *calls for us*. He comes in his word and ordinances, and calls us to them, calls us by them, calls us to himself. He calls for *thee* in particular, for thee *by name*, *Psal. xxvii. 8*. And if he call thee he will *cure* thee, he will *comfort* thee.

2. The haste which Mary made to Christ upon this notice given her, *ver. 29*. *As soon as she heard* this good news, that the *Master was come*, she *arose quickly*, and came to him. She little thought how near he was to her, for he is often nearer to them that mourn in Sion, than they are aware of; but when she knew how near he was, she starts up, and, in a transport of joy, runs to meet him; the least intimation of Christ's gracious approaches is enough to a lively faith, which stands ready to take the hint, and answer the first call. When Christ was come, (1.) She did not consult the *decorum* of her mourning, but forgetting ceremony, and the common usage in such cases, she runs through the town to meet Christ. Let not nice punctilio's of decency and honour deprive us, at any time, of opportunities of conversing with Christ. (2.) She did not consult her neighbours the Jews, that were *with her comforting her*; she left them all to come to him, and did not only not ask their advice, but not so much as ask their leave, or beg their pardon for her rudeness.

We are told, *ver. 30*. where she found the Master; he was not yet come into Bethany, but was at the town's end, *in that place where Martha met him*. See here, 1. Christ's love to his work; he staid near the place where the grave was, that he might be ready to go to it; and would not go into the town to *refresh himself*, after the fatigue of his journey, till he had done the work he came to do; nor would he go into the town, lest it should look like ostentation, and a design to levy a crowd to be spectators of the miracle. 2. Mary's love to Christ; still she *loved much*: Though Christ had seemed unkind in his delays, yet she can take nothing amiss from him. Let us go thus to Christ *without the camp*, *Heb. xiii. 13*.

3. The misconception which the Jews that were with Mary, made of her going away so hastily, *ver. 31*. They said, *She goes to the grave to weep there!* Martha bore up better under this affliction than Mary did, who was a woman of a tender and sorrowful spirit; such was her natural temper. Those that are so, have need to watch against melancholy, and ought to be pitied and helped. Those comforters found that their formalities did her no service, but that she hardened herself in sorrow, and therefore concluded, when she went out, and turned that way, it was to *go to the grave*, and *weep there*. See, 1. What often is the *folly and fault of mourners*; they contrive how to aggravate their own grief, and to make ill worse. We are apt, in such cases, to take a strange *pleasure* in our own pain, and to say *we do well* to be passionate in our grief, *even unto death*, apt to fasten upon those things that aggravate the affliction, and what good doth it do us, when it is our duty to reconcile ourselves to the will of God in it. What need mourners go to the grave to weep there, when they sorrow not as those that have no hope. Affliction of itself is grievous, why should we make it more so? 2. What is the *wisdom and duty of comforters*, and that is to prevent, as much as may be, in those who grieve inordinately, the revival of the sorrow, and to divert it. Those Jews that followed Mary, were thereby led to Christ, and became the witnesses of one of his most glorious miracles. It is good cleaving to Christ's friends in their sorrows, for thereby we may come to know him better.

4. Mary's address to our Lord Jesus, *ver. 32*. she came attended with her train of comforters, and *fell down at his feet*, as one overwhelmed with a passionate sorrow, and said with many tears (as appears, *ver. 33*.) *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*, as Martha said before, for they had often said it to one another. Now here,

1. Her posture is very humble and submissive; *She fell down at his feet*, which was more than Martha did, who had a greater command of her passions. She *fell down* as a sinking mourner, but *fell down at his feet* as a humble petitioner. This Mary had sitten at *Christ's feet to hear his word*, *Luke x. 39*. and here we find her there on another errand. Note, Those that in a day of peace set themselves at Christ's feet to receive instructions from him, may with comfort and confidence, in a day of trouble, cast themselves at his feet, with hope to find favour with him. She *fell at his feet*, as one submitting to his *will* in what was done, and referring herself to his *good will* in what was now to be done. When we are in affliction, we must cast ourselves at Christ's feet in a penitent sorrow, and self-abasement for sin, and a patient resignation of ourselves to the divine conduct. Mary's casting herself at Christ's feet, was in token of the profound respect and veneration she had for him. Thus they were wont to give honour to their kings and princes; but our Lord Jesus not appearing in secular glory as an earthly prince, they who by this posture of adoration gave honour



to him, certainly looked upon him as more than a man, and intended hereby to give him divine honour. Mary hereby made profession of the Christian faith, as truly as Martha did, and, in effect, said, *I believe that thou art the Christ; bowing the knee to Christ, and confessing him with the tongue*, are put together as equivalent, *Rom. xiv. 11. Phil. ii. 11.* This she did in the presence of the Jews that attended her, who, though friends to her and her family, yet were bitter enemies to Christ; yet in their sight she fell at Christ's feet, as one that was neither ashamed to own the veneration she had for Christ, nor afraid of disobliging her friends and neighbours by it. Let them resent it as they pleased, she falls at his feet, and if this be to be vile, will be yet more vile, see *Cant. viii. 1.* We serve a master, whom we have no reason to be ashamed of, and whose acceptance of our services is sufficient to ballance the reproach of men, and all their revilings.

2. Her address is very pathetic, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* Christ's delay was designed for the best, and proved so, yet both the sisters very indecently cast the same in his teeth, and, in effect, charge him with the death of their brother; this repeated challenge he might justly have resented; might have told them he had something else to do than to be at their beck, and to attend them; he must come when his business would permit him; but not a word of this, he considered the circumstances of their affliction, and that losers think they may have leave to speak; and therefore over-looked the rudeness of this welcome, and gave us an example of mildness and meekness in such cases. Mary added no more, as Martha did, but it appears by what follows, that what she fell short in words, she made up in tears; she said less than Martha, but wept more; and tears of devout affection have a voice, a loud prevailing voice, in the ears of Christ, no rhetoric like that.

33. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 34. And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. 35. Jesus wept. 36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him. 37. And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? 38. Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. 40. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? 41. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead body was laid. And Jesus lift up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, loose him, and let him go.

Here we have,

First, Christ's tender sympathy with his afflicted friends, and the share he took to himself in their sorrows, which appeared three ways.

1. By the inward groans and troubles of his spirit, *ver. 33. Jesus saw Mary weeping*, for the loss of a loving brother, and the Jews that came with her weeping, for the loss of a good neighbour and friend, when he saw what a place of weepers, a *bochim* this was, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. See here,

(1.) The griefs of the sons of men represented in the tears of Mary and her friends: What an emblem was here of this world, this vale of tears. Nature itself teacheth us to weep over our dear relations, when they are removed by death; providence thereby calls to weeping and mourning. It is likely Lazarus's estate devolved upon his sisters, and was a considerable addition to their fortunes, and in such a case, people say now-a-days, though they cannot with their relations dead (that is, they do not say they do) yet if they were dead, they would not wish them alive again; but these sisters, whatever they got by their brother's death, heartily wished him alive again. Religion teacheth us likewise to weep with them that weep, as these Jews here with Mary, considering that we ourselves also are in the body. They that truly love their friends, will share with them in their joys and griefs, for what is friendship, but a communication of affections? *Job xvi. 5.*

(2.) The grace of the Son of God, and his compassion towards those that are in misery? In all their afflictions he is afflicted, *Isa. lxiii. 9. Judg. x. 16.* When Christ saw them all in tears, 1. He groaned in the spirit. He suffered himself to be tempted, as we are, when we are disturbed by some great affliction, yet without sin. This was an expression, either, (1.) Of his displeasure at the inordinate grief of those about him, as *Mark v. 39. Why make ye this ado, and weep?* What a hurry is here; doth this become

those that believe a God, a heaven, and another world? Or, (2.) Of his resentment of the calamitous state of human life, and the power of death, which fallen man is subject to; being now to make a vigorous attack upon death and the grave, he thus stirred up himself to the encounter, put on the garments of vengeance, and his fury it upheld him; and that he might the more resolutely undertake the redress of our grievances, and the cure of our griefs, he was pleased to make himself sensible of the weight of them, and under the burthen of them he now groaned in spirit. Or, (3.) It was an expression of his kind sympathy with his friends that were in sorrow. Here was the sounding of the bowels, and the mercies which the afflicted church so earnestly solicits for, *Isa. lxiii. 15.* Christ not only seemed concerned, but he groaned in the spirit; he was inwardly and sincerely affected with the case; David's pretended friends counterfeited sympathy to disguise their enmity, *Psal. xli. 6.* but we must learn of Christ to have our love and sympathy without dissimulation. Christ's was a deep and hearty sigh. 2. He was troubled. He troubled himself; so the phrase is, very significantly. He had all the passions and affections of the human nature, for in all things he must be like to his brethren; but he had a perfect command of them, so that they were never up, but when and as they were called; he was never troubled, but when he troubled himself, as he saw cause; he often composed himself to trouble, but was never discomposed or disordered by it; he was voluntary both in his passion, and in his compassion; he had power to lay down his grief, and power to take it again.

2. His concern for them appeared by his kind enquiry after the poor remains of his deceased friends, *ver. 34. Where have ye laid him?* He knew where he was laid, and yet asks, because, 1. He would thus express himself as a man, even then when he was going to exert the power of a God. Being found in fashion as a man, he accommodates himself to the way and manner of the sons of men; *non nescit, sed quasi nescit*, saith Austin here. 2. He enquired where the grave was, lest if he had gone strait to it of his own knowledge, the unbelieving Jews should thence have taken occasion to suspect a collusion between him and Lazarus, and a trick in the case. Many expositors observe this from Chrysostom. 3. He would thus divert the grief of his mourning friends, by raising their expectations of something great, *q. d.* I did not come hither with an address of condolence, to mingle a few fruitless insignificant tears with yours; no, I have other work to do; come, let us adjourn to the grave, and go about our business there. Note. A serious address to our work, is the best remedy against inordinate grief. (4.) He would hereby intimate to us the special care he takes of the bodies of the saints, while they lie in the grave; he takes notice where they are laid, and will look after them; there is not only a covenant with the dust, but a guard upon it.

3. It appeared by his tears. Those about him did not tell him where the body was buried, but desired him to come and see, and led him directly to the grave; that his eye might yet more affect his heart with the calamity: As he was going to the grave, as if he had been following the corpse thither, *Jesus wept*, *ver. 35.* A very short verse, but affords many useful instructions. 1. That Jesus Christ was really and truly man, and partook with the children, not only of flesh and blood, but of a human soul susceptible of the impressions of joy and grief, and other affections. Christ gave this proof of his humanity, in both senses of the word; that as a man he could weep, and as a merciful man he would weep, before he gave this proof of his divinity. 2. That he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, as was foretold, *Isa. liii. 3.* We never read that he laughed, but more than once we have him in tears. Thus he shews not only that a mournful state will consist with the love of God, but that they who sow to the Spirit, must sow in tears. 3. Tears of compassion well become Christians, and make them most to resemble Christ. It is a relief to those who are in sorrow to have their friends sympathize with them, especially such a friend as the Lord Jesus.

Different constructions were put upon Christ's weeping.

1. Some made a kind and candid interpretation of it, and what was very natural, *ver. 36. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him.* They seem to admire he should have so strong an affection for one whom he was not related to, and whom he had not had any long acquaintance with, for Christ spent most of his time in Galilee, a great way from Lazarus. It becomes us, according to this example of Christ, to shew our love to our friends, both living and dying. We must sorrow for our brethren that sleep in Jesus, as those that are full of love, though not void of hope; as the devout men that buried Stephen, *Acts viii. 2.* Though our tears profit not the dead, they embalm their memory. These tears were indications of his particular love to Lazarus, but he has given proofs no less evident of his love to all the saints, in that he died for them. When he only dropped a tear over Lazarus, they said, *See how he loved him;* much more reason have we to say so, for whom he hath laid down his life, *see how he loved us. Greater love has no man than this.*

2. Others made a peevish unfair reflexion upon it, as if these tears spoke his inability to help his friend, *ver. 37. Could not this man, that open the eyes of the blind, have prevented the death of Lazarus.* Here it is sily insinuated, 1. That the death of Lazarus being (as it seemed by his tears) a great grief to him, if he could have prevented it he would, and therefore because he did not, they incline to think he could not, as when he was dying, they concluded he could not, because he did not save himself, and come down from the cross; not considering



considering that divine power is always directed in its operations by divine wisdom, not merely according to his will, but according to the counsel of his will, wherein it becomes us to acquiesce. If Christ's friends whom he loves die; if his church whom he loves be persecuted and afflicted, we must not impute it to any defect, either in his power or love, but conclude, it is because he sees it for the best.

2. That therefore it might justly be questioned, whether he did indeed *open the eyes of the blind*, i. e. whether it was not a sham. His not working this miracle, they thought enough to invalidate the former; at least it should seem he had a limited power, and therefore not a divine one. Christ soon convinced these *whisperers*, by raising Lazarus from the dead, which was the greater work that he could have prevented his death, but therefore did not, because he would glorify himself the more.

Secondly, Christ's approach to the grave, and the preparation that was made for working this miracle.

1. Christ repeats his groans, upon his coming near the grave; *ver. 38. again groaning in himself, he comes to the grave*; he groaned, (1.) Being displeased at the unbelief of those, who spoke doubtingly of his power, and blamed him for not preventing the death of Lazarus; he was *grieved for the hardness of their hearts*. He never groaned so much for his own pains and sufferings, as for the sins and follies of men, particularly Jerusalem's, *Matt. xxiii. 37.* (2.) Being affected with the fresh lamentations, which it is likely the mourning sisters made, when they came near the grave, more passionately and pathetically than before; his tender spirit was sensibly touched with their wailings. (3.) Some think he *groaned in spirit*, because to gratify the desires of his friends, he was to bring Lazarus again into this sinful troublesome world, from that rest into which he was newly entered; it would be a kindness to Martha and Mary, but it would be to him like thrusting one out to a stormy sea again, that was newly got into a safe and quiet harbour. If Lazarus had been let alone, Christ would quickly have gone to him into the other world; but being restored to life, Christ quickly left him behind in this world. (4.) Christ groaned as one that would affect himself with the calamitous state of the human nature, as subject to death, from which he was now about to redeem Lazarus. Thus he stirred up himself to take hold on God in the prayer he was to make, that he might *offer it up with strong crying*, *Heb. v. 7.* Ministers when they are sent by the preaching of the gospel to raise dead souls, should be much affected with the deplorable condition of those they preach to and pray for, and groan in themselves to think of it.

2. The grave is here described wherein Lazarus lay; *it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it*. The graves of the common people, probably were digged as ours are; but persons of distinction were, as with us, interred in vaults, so Lazarus was, and such was the sepulchre in which Christ was buried. Probably this fashion was kept up among the Jews, in imitation of the patriarchs, who buried their dead in the cave of Machpelah, *Gen. xxiii. 19.* This care taken of the dead bodies of their friends, intimates their expectation of their resurrection; they reckoned the solemnity of the funeral ended, when the stone was rolled to the grave, or, as here, *laid upon it*, like that on the mouth of the den, into which Daniel was cast, *Dan. vi. 17.* that the *purpose might not be changed*, intimating that the dead are separated from the living, and gone the way whence they shall not return. This stone was probably a *grave-stone*, with an inscription upon it, which the Greeks called *μνημείον*, a memorandum, because it is both a memorial of the dead, and a memento to the living, putting them in remembrance of that which we are all concerned to remember. It is called by the Latins, *Monumentum*, à *monendo*, because it gives warning.

3. Orders are given to remove the stone, *ver. 39. Take ye away the stone*. He would have this stone removed, that all the standers-by might see the body lie dead in the sepulchre; and that way might be made for its coming out, and it might appear to be a true body, and not a *ghost* or *spectre*. He would have some of the servants to remove it, that they might be witnesses, by the smell of the putrefaction of the body, and that therefore it was truly dead. It is a good step towards the raising of a soul to spiritual life, when the stone is taken away, when prejudices are removed and got over, and way made for the word to the heart, that it may do its work there, and say what it has to say.

4. An objection made by Martha against the opening of the grave, *Lord, by this time he stinketh*, or, *is become noisome, for he has been dead four days*, *τετραπλήσιον ἡμέρας ἐστίν*, *quadriduanius est*; he is *four days old* in the other world; a citizen and inhabitant of the grave of four days standing. Probably Martha perceived the body to smell, as they were removing the stone, and therefore cried out thus.

1. It is easy from hence to observe the nature of human bodies. four days is but a little while, yet what a great change will that make with the body of man, if it be but so long *without food*, much more if so long *without life*. Dead bodies (saith Dr. Hammond) after a revolution of the humours, which is completed in seventy two hours, naturally tend to putrefaction; and the Jews say, that by the fourth day after death, the body is so altered, that one cannot be sure it is such a person, so Maimonides in Lightfoot. Therefore Christ rose the third day, because he was not to *see corruption*.

2. It is not so easy to say, what was Martha's design in saying this. 1. Some think she said it in a due tenderness, and such as decency teaches to the dead body; now it began to putrify, she did not care it should be thus publickly shewn and made a spectacle of. 2. Others think she said it out of a concern for Christ, lest the smell of the dead

body should be *offensive* to him. That which is very noisome is compared to an open sepulchre, *Psal. v. 9.* If there were any thing noisome, she would not have her master near it; but he was none of those tender and delicate ones, that cannot bear an ill smell; if he had, he would not have visited the world of mankind, which sin had made a perfect dunghill altogether stinking, *Psal. xiv. 3.* 3. It should seem by Christ's answer, that it was the language of her unbelief and distrust; Lord, it is too late now to attempt any kindness to him, his body begins to rot, and it is impossible this putrid carcase should *live*. She gives up his case as helpless and hopeless, there having been no instances either of late or formerly, of any raised to life after they had begun to see corruption. When *our bones are dried*, we are ready to say, *our hope is lost*. Yet this distrustful word of her's served to make the miracle both the more evident and the more illustrious; by this it appeared he was truly dead, and not in a trance; for though the posture of a dead body might be counterfeited, the smell could not. Her suggesting that it *could not be done*, puts the more honour upon him that *did it*.

5. The gentle reproof Christ gave to Martha, for the weakness of her faith, *ver. 40. Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God*. This word of his to her was not before recorded, it is probable he said it to her, when she had said, *ver. 27. Lord, I believe*; and it is enough that it is recorded here, where it is repeated. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus has given us all the assurances imaginable, that a *sincere faith* shall at length be crowned with a *blessed vision*; if thou believe, *thou shalt see God's glorious appearances for thee* in this world, and *to thee* in the other world. If we will take Christ's word, and rely on his power and faithfulness, we shall *see the glory of God*, and be happy in the sight. 2. We have need to be often minded of these *sure mercies*, with which our Lord Jesus hath encouraged us. Christ doth not give a direct answer to what Martha hath said, nor any particular promise of what he would do, but orders her to keep hold of the general assurances he had already given; *only believe*. We are apt to forget what Christ hath spoken, and need him to put us in mind of it by his Spirit, *said I not unto thee so and so*? And dost thou think he will ever unfay it.

6. The opening of the grave in obedience to Christ's order, notwithstanding Martha's objection, *ver. 41. Then they took away the stone*. Then, when Martha was satisfied, and had waved her objection, then they proceeded. If we will see the glory of God, we must let Christ take his own way, and not prescribe, but subscribe, to him. *They took away the stone*, and that was all they could do, Christ only could *give life*. What man can do is, but to *prepare the way of the Lord*, to fill the vallies, and level the hills, and, as here, to *take away the stone*.

Thirdly, The miracle itself wrought. The spectators invited by the rolling away of the stone, gathered about the grave, not to commit *dust to dust, earth to earth*, but to receive dust from the dust, and earth from the earth again, and their expectations being raised, our Lord Jesus addresses himself to his work.

1. He applies himself to his *living Father* in heaven, so he had called him, *John vi. 57.* and so eyes him not.

1. The gesture he used was very significant; *he lift up his eyes*, an outward expression of the elevation of his mind; and to shew them who stood by, from whence he derived his power. And to set us an example; this outward sign is hereby recommended to our practice, see *John xvii. 1.* look how they will answer it who profanely ridicule it; but that which is especially charged upon us hereby, is to *lift up our hearts* to God in the heavens; what is prayer, but the ascent of the soul to God, and the directing of its affections and motions heavenwards. He *lift up* his eyes as looking *above*, and looking *beyond* the grave where Lazarus lay, and *over-looking* all the difficulties that arose from thence, that he might have his eyes fixed upon the divine omnipotence; to teach us to do as Abraham, who considered not *his own body now dead, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb*, never took those into his thoughts, and so gained such a degree of faith, as not to *stagger at the promise*, *Rom. iv. 20.*

2. His address to God was with great assurance, and such a confidence as became him. *Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me*. He hath here taught us by his own example; 1. In prayer to call God *Father*, and to draw nigh to him as children to a father, with a humble reverence, and yet with a holy boldness. 2. In our prayers to *praise him*, and when we come to beg for further mercy, thankfully to acknowledge former favours. Thanksgivings that speak God's glory, not our own, like the Pharisee's, *God, I thank thee*, are decent forms, into which to put our supplications.

But our Saviour's thanksgiving here was intended to express the unshaken assurance he had of the effecting of this miracle, which he had in his own power to do in concurrence with his Father. *Father, I thank thee*, that my will and thine are in this matter as always the same. Elijah and Elisha raised the dead, as servants, by *intreaty*; but Christ, as a Son, by *authority*, having life in himself, and power to quicken whom he would; and he speaks of this as his own act, *ver. 11. I go, that I may awake him*, yet he speaks of it as what he had obtained by prayer, for his Father *heard him*; probably he put up the prayer for it when he *groaned in spirit*, once and again, *ver. 33, 38.* in a *mental* prayer, with groanings which could not be uttered. Now Christ speaks of this miracle as an answer to prayer. (1.) Because he would thus *humble himself*; though he were a son, yet *learned he this obedience*, to ask and receive. His mediatorial crown was granted him upon request, though it is *of right*, *Psal. ii. 8.* and *John xvii. 5.* he prays for the glory he had before the world, though



though having never forfeited it, he might have demanded it. (2.) Because he was pleased thus to *honour prayer*, making it the key wherewith even he unlocked the treasures of divine power and grace. Thus he would teach us in prayer by the lively exercise of faith, to enter into the holiest.

Now Christ being assured his prayer was answered,

1. He professeth his thankful acceptance of this answer, *I thank thee that thou hast heard me*. Though the miracle was not yet wrought, yet the prayer was answered, and he triumphs before the victory. No other can pretend to such an assurance as Christ had, yet we may by faith in the promise have a prospect of mercy before it be actually given in, and may rejoice in that prospect, and give God thanks for it. In David's devotions, the same psalm which begins with prayer for a mercy, closes with thanksgivings for it.

Note, 1. Mercies in answer to prayer, ought in a special manner to be acknowledged with thankfulness. Besides the grant of the mercy itself, we are to value it as a great favour to have our poor prayers taken notice of. 2. We ought to *meet* the first appearances of the return of prayer with early thanksgivings. As God answers us with mercy, even *before we call*, and *hears while we are yet speaking*, so we should answer him with praise, even before he grants, and give him thanks while he is yet speaking good words and comfortable words.

2. He professeth his cheerful assurance of a ready answer at any time, *ver. 47. And I know that thou hearest me always*. Let none think that this was some uncommon favour granted him now, such as he never had before, nor should ever have again; no, he had the same divine power going along with him in his whole undertaking, and undertook nothing but what he knew to be agreeable to the counsel of God's will. *I gave thanks* (saith he) *for being heard in this*, because I am sure to be heard in every thing. See here, 1. The mighty interest our Lord Jesus had in heaven; the Father *heard him always*, he had *access* to the Father upon every occasion, and *success* with him in every errand. And we may be sure his interest is not the less for his going to heaven, which may encourage us to depend upon his intercession, and put all our petitions into his hand, for we are sure that him the Father *hears always*. 2. The confidence he had of that interest: *I knew it*. He did not in the least hesitate or doubt concerning it; but had an entire satisfaction in his own mind of the Father's complacency in him, and concurrence with him, in every thing. We cannot have such a particular assurance as he had; but this we know, that *whatsoever we ask according to his will, he heareth us*, 1 John v. 14, 15.

But why should Christ give this publick intimation of his obtaining this miracle by prayer? He adds, it is *because of the people which stand by, that they may believe that thou hast sent me*; for *prayer may preach*.

1. It was to obviate the objections of his enemies, and their reflexions. It was blasphemously suggested by the Pharisees, and their creatures, that he wrought his miracles by compact with the devil; now to evidence the contrary, he openly made his address to God, using *prayers*, and not *charms*, not *peeping and muttering*, as they did that used *familiar spirits*, Isa. viii. 19. but with elevated eyes and voice professing his communication with heaven, and dependence on heaven.

2. It was to corroborate the faith of those that were well inclined to him, *that they may believe that thou hast sent me*, not to destroy mens lives, but to save them. Moses, to shew that God *sent him*, made the earth open and swallow men up, Numb. xvi. 10. Elijah, to shew that God *sent him*, made fire come from heaven, and devour men, for the *law* was a dispensation of terror and death; but Christ proves his mission by raising to life one that was dead. Some give this sense; had Christ declared his doing it freely by his own power, some of his weak disciples, who as yet understood not his divine nature, would have thought he took too much upon him, and have been stumbled at it; these *babes* could not bear that *strong meat*, therefore he chuses to speak of his power as received and derived; he speaks self-denyingly of himself, that he might speak the more plainly to us. *Non ita respexit ad suam dignitatem atque ad nostram salutem*. Jansen.

2. He now applies himself to his dead friend in the earth. He cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*. He could have raised Lazarus by a silent exerting of his power and will, and the undiscernable operations of the Spirit of life, but he did it by a call, a loud call.

1. To be *significant* of the power then put forth for the raising of Lazarus; how he *created this new thing*, he *spake and it was done*. He cried aloud, to signify the greatness of the work, and of the power employed in it, and to excite himself as it were to this attack upon the gates of death, as soldiers engage with a shout. Speaking to Lazarus, it was proper to *cry with a loud voice*; for, 1. The *soul* of Lazarus, which was to be *called back*, was *at a distance*, not hovering about the grave, as the Jews fancied, but removed to Hades, the world of spirits, now it is natural to *speak loud*, when we call to those *at a distance*. 2. The *body* of Lazarus, which was to be *called up* was *asleep*, and we use to *speak loud*, when we would awake any out of sleep. He cried with a *loud voice*, that the scripture might be fulfilled, Isa. xlv. 19. *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth*.

2. To be *typical* of other works of wonder, and particularly other resurrections, which the power of Christ was to effect. This loud call was a figure,

(1.) Of the gospel call, by which dead souls were to be brought out of the grave of sin, which resurrection Christ had formerly spoken of, John v. 25. and of his word as the means of it, John vi. 63. and now he gives a *specimen* of it. By his word, he *saith to souls live*, yea, he *saith to them live*, Exek. xvi. 6. *Arise from the dead*, Eph. v. 14. The Spirit of life from God entered into those that had been dead and dry bones, when Ezekiel prophesied *over them*, Exek. xxxvii. 10. They who infer from the commands of the word to *turn and live*, that man has a power of his own to convert and regenerate himself, might as well infer from this call to Lazarus, that he had a power to raise himself to life.

(2.) Of the sound of the archangel's trumpet at the last day with which they that sleep in the dust shall be awakened, and summoned before the great tribunal. When Christ shall *descend with a shout, a call, or command*, like this here, *come forth*. See Psal. l. 4. *He shall call both to the heavens for their souls, and to the earth for their bodies, that he may judge his people*.

This loud call here was but *short*, yet *mighty through God*, to the battering down of the strong holds of the grave.

1. He calls him by name, Lazarus, as we call those by their names, whom we would awake out of a fast sleep. God said to Moses, as a mark of his favour, *I know thee by name*. The naming of him intimates that the same individual person that died shall rise again at the last day. He that *calls the stars by their names*, can distinguish by name his stars that are in the dust of the earth, and will lose none of them.

2. He calls him *out of the grave*, speaking to him as if he were already alive, and had nothing to do but to come out of his grave. He doth not say unto him, *live*, for he himself must give life, but he saith to him, *move*, for when by the grace of Christ we live spiritually, we must stir up our selves to *move*; the grave of sin and this world is no place for those whom Christ has quickened, and therefore they must *come forth*.

3. The event was according to the intention, *he that was dead came forth*, ver. 44. Power went along with the word of Christ to reunite the soul and body of Lazarus, and then he came forth. The miracle is described not by its invisible springs to satisfy our curiosity, but its visible effects to confirm our faith. Do any ask where the soul of Lazarus was, during the four days of its separation? We are not told, but have reason to think it was in paradise, *in joy and felicity*; but you will say, was it not then really an unkindness to it to return it into the prison of the body? And if it were yet, being for the honour of Christ, and the serving of the interests of his kingdom, it was no more an injury to him than it was to St. Paul, to continue in the flesh, when he knew that to depart to Christ was so much better. If any ask whether Lazarus, after he was raised, could give an account or description of his soul's removal out of the body, or return to it, or what he saw in the other world; I suppose, both those changes were so unaccountable to himself, that he must say with Paul, *whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell*, and of what he saw and heard, that it was not lawful, or possible to express it. In a world of sense we cannot frame to our selves, much less communicate to others, any adequate ideas of the world of spirits, and the affairs of that world; let us not covet to be wise above what is written, and this is all that is written concerning the resurrection of Lazarus, that *he that was dead came forth*. And some have observed that though we read of many that were raised from the dead, who no doubt conversed familiarly with men afterwards, yet the scripture has not recorded one word spoken by any of them, except by our Lord Jesus only.

This miracle was wrought, 1. *Speedily*; nothing intervenes between the command, *come forth*; and the effect, *he came forth, dictum factum*, let there be life, and there was life. Thus the change in the resurrection will be *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, 1 Cor. xv. 52. The almighty power that can do it, can do it in an instant; *then shalt thou call, and I will answer*, will come at the call, as Lazarus, here am I. 2. *Perfectly*. He was so thoroughly revived, that he got up out of his grave, as strongly as ever he got up out of his bed; and returned not only to life, but health. He was not raised to serve a present turn, but to live as other men. 3. With this additional miracle (as some reckon it) that he came out of his grave, though he was fettered with his *grave clothes*, with which he was *bound hand and foot*, and *his face bound about with a napkin*; for so the manner of the Jews was to bury; and he came forth in the same dress wherein he was buried, that it might appear, it was he himself, and not another, and that he was not only alive but strong, and able to walk, after a sort, even in his grave clothes. The *binding of his face with a napkin*, proved that he had been really dead, for otherwise, in less than so many days time, that would have smothered him. And the standers-by in unbinding him, would *handle him*, and *see him, that it was he himself*, and so be witnesses of the miracle. Now see here, (1.) How little we carry away with us, when we leave the world, only a winding-sheet and a coffin; there is no change of raiment in the grave, nothing but a single suit of grave clothes. (2.) What condition we shall be in, in the grave. What *wisdom or device* can there be, where the eyes are hood-winked, or what working, where the hands and feet are fettered, and so it will be in the grave, whither we are going. Lazarus being *come forth*, hampered and embarrassed with his grave clothes, we may well imagine that those about the grave were exceedingly surprized and



and frightened at it, we would be so; if we should see a dead body rise; but Christ to make the thing familiar, sets them to work, *loose him*, slacken his grave clothes, that they may serve for day clothes till he comes to his house, and then he will go himself so clad, without guide or supporter to his own house. As in the Old Testament, the translations of Enoch and Elias were sensible demonstrations of an invisible and future state, the one about the middle of the patriarchal age, the other of the Mosaic economy; so the resurrection of Lazarus was in the New Testament designed for the confirmation of the doctrine of the resurrection.

45. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. 46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. 47. ¶ Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doth many miracles. 48. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49. And one of them named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation: 52. And not for that nation only; but that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad. 53. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. 54. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. 55. ¶ And the Jews passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. 56. Then fought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? 57. Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

We have here an account of the consequences of this glorious miracle, which were as usual; to some it was a favour of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

1. Some were *invited* by it, and induced to believe. Many of the Jews when they *saw the things that Jesus did, believed on him*, and well they might, for it was an incontestable proof of his divine mission. They had often heard of his miracles, and yet evaded the conviction of them, by calling in question the matter of fact; but now they had themselves seen this done, their unbelief was conquered, and they yielded at last: But *blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed*. The more we see of Christ, the more cause we shall see to love him and confide in him. These were some of those Jews that came to Mary to comfort her. When we are doing good offices to others, we put our selves in the way of receiving favours from God, and have opportunities of getting good when we are doing good.

2. Others were irritated by it, and hardened in their unbelief.

1. The *informers* were so, *ver. 46. Some of them* who were eye-witnesses of the miracle were so far from being convinced, that they *went to the Pharisees*, whom they knew to be his implacable enemies, and *told them what things Jesus had done*; not merely as a matter of news worthy their notice, much less as an inducement to them to think more favourably of Christ, but with a spiteful design to excite those who needed no spur the more vigorously to prosecute him. Here is a strange instance, 1. Of a most *obstinate infidelity*, refusing to yield to the most powerful means of conviction; and it is hard to imagine how they could evade the force of this evidence, but that the *God of this world* had *blinded their minds*. 2. Of a most *inveterate enmity*. If they would not be satisfied that he was to be believed in as the Christ, yet one would think they should have been mollified, and persuaded not to persecute him; but if the water be not sufficient to quench the fire, it will enflame it. They told *what Jesus had done*, and told no more but what was true; but their malice gave a tincture of diabolism to their information equal to that of *lying*; perverting what is true is as bad as forging what is false. *Doeg* is called a *false, lying, and deceitful tongue*, *Psal. cxx. 2, 3.*—*lii. 2, 3, 4.* though what he said was true.

2. The judges, the leaders, the *blind leaders* of the people were no less *exasperated* by the report made to them, and here we are told what they did.

1. A special council is called and held, *ver. 47. Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council*, as was foretold, *Psal. ii. 2. The rulers take counsel together against the Lord*. Consults of the Sanhedrin were intended for the publick good, but here under colour of that the greatest injury and mischief is done to the people. The things that belong to the nation's peace were hid from the eyes of those that were intrusted with its counsels. This council was called, not only

for joint advice, but for mutual irritation; that as iron sharpens iron, and as coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so they might exasperate and enflame one another with enmity and rage against Christ and his doctrine.

2. The case is proposed, and shewed to be weighty, and of mighty consequence.

1. The matter to be debated, was, what course they should take with this Jesus to stop the growth of his interest; they said, *What do we? for this man doth many miracles*. The information given about the raising of Lazarus was produced, and the *men, brethren and fathers*, are called in to help as solicitously as if a formidable enemy had been with an army in the bowels of their country. (1.) They own the truth of Christ's miracles, and that he had wrought *many* of them; they are therefore witnesses against themselves, for they acknowledged his credentials, and yet denied his commission. (2.) They consider what was to be *done*, and chide themselves that they had not done something sooner effectually to crush him. They do not take it at all into their consideration, whether they should not receive him; and own him as the Messiah, though they professed to expect him; and Jesus gave pregnant proofs of his being so; but they take it for granted he is an enemy, and as such is to be run down. *What do we? Have we no care to support our church? Is it nothing to us that a doctrine so destructive to our interest spreads thus? Shall we tamely yield up the ground we have got in the affections of the people? Shall we see our authority brought into contempt, and the craft by which we get our living ruined, and not bestir our selves? What have we been doing all this while? And what are we now thinking of? Shall we be always talking and bring nothing to pass?*

2. That which made this matter weighty, was the peril they apprehended their church and nation to be in from the Romans, *ver. 48. If we do not silence him, and take him off, all men will believe in him; And this being the setting up of a new king, the Romans will take umbrage at it, and will come with an army, and take away our place and nation, and therefore it is no time to trifle*. See what an opinion they have,

1. Of their own *power*. They speak as if they thought Christ's progress and success in his work depended upon their connivance, as if he could not go on to work miracles, and make disciples unless they *let him alone*, as if it were in their power to conquer him who had conquered death; or as if they could *fight against God*, and prosper. But he that sits in heaven laughs at the fond conceit, which impotent malice has of its own omnipotence.

2. Of their own *politicks*. They fancy themselves to be men of mighty insight, and foresight; and great sagacity in their moral prognostications.

1. They take on them to prophesy, that in a little time, if he have liberty to go on, *all men will believe on him*; hereby owning when it was to serve their purpose, that his doctrine and miracles had a very convincing power in them, such as could not be resisted, but that all men would become his proselytes and votaries; thus do they now make his interest *formidable*, though to serve another turn, these same men strove to make it *contemptible*, *John vii. 48. Have any of the rulers believed on him? This was the thing they were afraid of, that men would believe on him, and then all their measures were broke. Note, The success of the gospel is the dread of its adversaries; if souls be saved they are undone*.

2. They foretel that if the generality of the nation be *drawn after him*, the rage of the Romans will be *drawn upon them*. They will *come and take away our place*; the country in general, especially Jerusalem, or the temple, the *holy place*, and *their place*; their darling, their idol. Or, their *preferments* in the temple, their *places* of power and trust.

Now it was true that the Romans had a very jealous eye upon them, and knew they wanted nothing but power and opportunity to shake off their yoke. It was likewise true, that if the Romans should pour an army in upon them, it would be very hard for them to make any head against it; yet here appeared a cowardise which one would not have found in the priests of the Lord, if they had not by their wickedness forfeited their interest in God, and all good men. Had they kept their integrity they needed not have feared the Romans, but they speak like a dispirited people, as the men of Judah, when they basely said to Sampson, knowest thou not that the Philistines rule over us, *Judg. xv. 11. When men lose their piety, they lose their courage*.

But, 1. It was false that there was any danger of the Romans being irritated against their nation by the progress of Christ's gospel, for it was no way *hurtful to kings or provinces*, but highly beneficial. The Romans had no jealousy at all of his growing interest, for he taught men to give tribute to Caesar, and not to *resist evil*, but take up the cross. The Roman governour at his trial could *find no fault* in him. There was more danger of the Romans being incensed against the Jewish nation by the priests than by Christ. Note, Pretended fears are oft the colour of malicious designs.

2. Had there really been some danger of displeasing the Romans by tolerating Christ's preaching, yet they would not justify their hating and persecuting a good man. Note, 1. The enemies of Christ and his gospel have often coloured their enmity with a seeming care for the *publick good*, and the *common safety*, and in order to that, have branded his prophets and ministers as troublers of Israel, and men that *turn the world upside down*. 2. Carnal policy commonly sets up *reasons of state*, in opposition to *rules of justice*. When men are concerned for their own wealth and safety more than for truth and duty,



it is wisdom from beneath, which is *earthly, sensual, and devilish*. But see what was the issue, they pretended to be afraid that their tolerating Christ's gospel would bring desolation upon them by the Romans, and therefore, *right or wrong*, set themselves against it; but it proved that their persecuting the gospel, brought upon them that which they feared, filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Romans came and *took away their place and nation*; and their place *knows them no more*. Note, That calamity which we seek to escape by sin, we take the most effectual course to bring upon our own heads; and they who think by opposing Christ's kingdom to secure or advance their own secular interest, will find Jerusalem a more *burthensome stone* than they think it is, *Zech. xii. 3.* *The fear of the wicked it shall come upon them.*

3. Caiaphas makes a *malicious*, but mystical speech in the council upon this occasion.

1. The *malice* of it appears *evident* at first view, *ver. 49, 50.* He being the *high priest*, and so president of the council, took upon him to decide the matter before it was debated; *you know nothing at all*, your hesitating betrays your ignorance, for it is not a thing that will bear a dispute, it is soon determined, if you consider that received maxim, *That it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people.* Here,

1. The counsellor was Caiaphas, who was *high priest that same year*. The high priesthood was by the divine appointment, settled upon the heir male of the house of Aaron, for and during the term of his natural life, and then to his heir male, but in those degenerate times it was become, though not an annual office, like a consulship, yet frequently changed, as they could make an interest with the Roman powers. Now it happened that *this year* Caiaphas wore the mitre.

2. The drift of the advice was in short this, that some way or other must be found out to put Jesus to death. We have reason to think that they strongly suspected him to be indeed the Messiah; but his doctrine was so contrary to their darling traditions, and secular interest, and his design did so thwart their notions of the Messiah's kingdom, that they resolve, be he who he will, he must be put to death. Caiaphas doth not say, let him be silenced, imprisoned, banished, though that is sufficient for the *restraint* of one they thought dangerous; but *die he must*. Note, Those that have set themselves against Christianity, have commonly divested themselves of humanity, and been infamous for cruelty.

3. This is plausibly insinuated, with all the subtlety as well as malice of the old serpent.

(1.) He suggests his own sagacity, which we must suppose him as high priest to excel in, though the *Urim and Thummin* was long since lost. How scornfully doth he say, *You know nothing*, that are but common priests; but you must give me leave to see further into things than you do. Thus it is common for those in authority to impose their corrupt dictates by virtue of that; and because they *should be* the wisest and best, to expect that every body should believe they *are so*.

(2.) He takes it for granted, that the case is plain, and past dispute, and those are very ignorant that do not see it to be so. Note, Reason and justice are often run down with a high hand: *Truth is fallen in the streets*, and when it is down, down with it; and *equity cannot enter*; and when it is out, out with it, *Isa. lix. 14.*

(3.) He insists upon a maxim in politics, that the welfare of communities is to be preferred before that of particular persons. *It is expedient for us* as priests, whose all lies at stake, that *one man die for the people*. Thus far it holds true, that it is *expedient*, and more than so, it is truly *honourable*, for a man to hazard his life in the service of his country, *Phil. ii. 17.* *1 John iii. 16.* but to put an innocent man to death, under colour of consulting the publick safety, is the devil's politics. Caiaphas craftily insinuates that the greatest and best man though *major singulis* is *minor universis*, and ought to think his life well spent, nay well lost to save his country from ruin; but what is this to the murdering of one that was evidently a great blessing, under pretence of preventing an imaginary mischief to the country? The case ought to have been put thus, Was it expedient for them to bring upon themselves and upon their nation the guilt of blood, a prophet's blood for the securing of their civil interests from a danger which they had no just reason to be afraid of? Was it expedient for them to drive God and their glory from them, rather than venture the Romans displeasure, who could do them no harm if they had God on their side. Note, Carnal policy, which steers only by secular considerations, while it thinks to *save all* by sin, *ruins all* at last.

2. The *mystery* that was in this counsel of Caiaphas, doth not appear at first view, but the evangelist leads us into it, *ver. 51, 52.* *This spake he not of himself*, it was not only the language of his own enmity and policy, but in these words he prophesied, though he himself was not aware of it, *That Jesus should die for that nation*. Here is a precious comment upon a pernicious text; the counsel of cursed Caiaphas so construed, as to fall in with the counsels of the blessed God. Charity teaches us to put the most favourable construction upon mens words and actions that they will bear; but piety teacheth us to make a good improvement of them, even contrary to that which they were intended for. If wicked men in what they *do* against us, *are God's hand* to humble and reform us, why may they not in what they say against us be God's mouth to instruct and convince us? But in this of Caiaphas, there was an extraordinary direction of heaven prompting him to say that which was capable of a very sublime sense. As the hearts of all men are in God's hand, so are their tongues. They are deceived, who say *our tongues are our own*, so that either we

may say what we will, and are not accountable to God's judgment, or we can say what we will, and are not restrainable by his providence and power. Balaam could not say what he would, when he came to curse Israel, nor Laban when he pursued Jacob.

The evangelist explains and enlarges upon Caiaphas's words.

1. He explains what he said, and shews how it not only was, but was intended to be accommodated to an excellent purpose. He did not *speak it of himself*; as it was an artifice to stir up the council against Christ, he spoke it *of himself*, or of the devil rather; but as it was an *oracle*, declaring it the purpose and design of God by the death of Christ, to save God's spiritual Israel from sin and wrath, he did not speak it *of himself*, for he knew nothing of the matter, *he meant not so, neither did his heart think so*, for nothing was in his heart but to *destroy and cut off*, *Isa. x. 7.*

(1.) He *prophesied*, and those that prophesied in their prophesying, did not *speak of themselves*. But is Caiaphas also among the prophets? He is so, *pro hac vice*, though an ill man, and an implacable enemy to Christ and his gospel. Note, 1. God can, and often doth make wicked men instruments to serve his own purposes, even contrary to their own intentions, for he has them not only *in a chain* to restrain them from doing the mischief they would, but *in a bridle* to lead them to do the service they would not. 2. Words of prophecy in the mouth are no infallible evidence of a principle of grace in the heart. *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?* will be rejected as a frivolous plea.

(2.) He prophesied, *being high priest that year*, not that his being high priest did at all dispose or qualify him to be a prophet; we cannot suppose the pontifical mitre to have first inspired with prophecy the basest head that ever wore it; but, (1.) Being high priest, and therefore of note and eminence in the conclave, God was pleased to put this significant word into his mouth, rather than into the mouth of any other, that it might be the more observed, or the non-observance of it the more aggravated.

The apophthegms of great men have been thought worthy of special regard; *A divine sentence is in the lips of the king*; therefore this divine sentence was put into the lips of the high priest, that even out of his mouth this word might be established, that Christ died for the good of the nation, and not for any iniquity in his hands. He happened to be high priest that year which was fixed to be the year of the redeemed, when Messiah the prince *must be cut off, but not for himself*, *Dan. ix. 26.* and he must own it. (2.) Being high priest *that year*, that famous year, in which there was to be such a plentiful effusion of the Spirit, more than had ever been yet, according to the prophecy, *Joel ii. 28, 29.* compared with *Acts ii. 17.* some drops of the blessed shower light upon Caiaphas, as the crumbs (saith Dr. Lightfoot) of the childrens bread, which fall from the table among the dogs. This year was the year of the expiration of the Levitical priesthood; and out of the mouth of him who was that year high priest, was extorted an implicit resignation of it to him, who should not (as they had done for many ages) offer beasts for that nation, but offer himself, and so make an end of the *sin-offering*. This resignation he made *unwittingly*, as Israel gave the blessing to Jacob.

(3.) The matter of his prophecy was, *that Jesus should die for that nation*, the very thing to which all the prophets bare witness, who *testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ*, *1 Pet. i. 11.* That the death of Christ must be the life and salvation of Israel; he meant by *that nation*, those in it that obstinately adhered to Judaism; but God meant those in it that would receive the doctrine of Christ, and become followers of him, all believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham. The death of Christ which Caiaphas was now projecting, proved the ruin of that interest in the nation, which he intended should be the security and establishment of, for it brought wrath upon them to the uttermost; but it proved the advancement of that interest, which he hoped it would have been the ruin of, for Christ being lifted up from the earth drew all men unto him. It is a great thing that is here prophesied; that Jesus should *die*, die for others, not only *for their good*, but *in their stead*; die for *that nation*, for they had the first offer made them of salvation by his death. If the whole nation of the Jews had unanimously believed in Christ, and received his gospel, they had been not only saved eternally, but saved as a nation from their grievances. The fountain was first *opened to the house of David*, *Zech. xiii. 1.* He so died for *that nation*, as that *the whole nation should not perish*, but that *a remnant should be saved*, *Rom. xi. 5.*

2. The evangelist enlargeth upon this word of Caiaphas, *ver. 52.* not for that nation only, how much soever it thought itself the darling of heaven, but *that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad*. Observe here,

1. The persons Christ died for; *not for the nation* of the Jews only, it would have been comparatively but a *light thing* for the Son of God to go through so vast an undertaking, only to restore the *preserved of Jacob*, and the *out-casts of Israel*; no, he must be *salvation to the ends of the earth*, *Isa. xlix. 6.* He must die for *the children of God that were scattered abroad*. 1. Some understand it of the children of God that were then *in being*, scattered abroad in the Gentile world, *devout men* of every nation, *Acts ii. 5.* that *feared God*, *Acts x. 2.* and worshipped him, *Acts xvi. 4.* proselytes of the gate, who served the God of Abraham, but submitted not to the ceremonial law of Moses; persons that had a favour of natural religion, but were *dispersed* in the nations, had no solemn assemblies of their own, nor any peculiar profession to unite in, or distinguish themselves by.

Now



Now Christ died to incorporate these in one great society, to be denominated from him, and governed by him; and this was the setting up a standard, to which all that had a regard to God, and a concern for their souls, might have recourse, and under which they might lift themselves. 2. Others take in with these all that belong to the election of grace, who are called the children of God, though not yet born, because they are *predestinated to the adoption of children*, Eph. i. 5. Now these are *scattered abroad in several places of the earth*, out of all kindreds and tongues, Rev. vii. 9. And in several *ages of the world*, to the end of time; there are those that *fear him throughout all generations*, to all those he had an eye in the atonement he made by his blood; as he prayed so he died, for *all that should believe on him*.

2. The purpose and intention of his death concerning those persons; he died to *gather them in*, who wandered; and to *gather them together in one*, who were scattered; to *invite them to him*, that were at a distance from him, and to unite them in him, that were at a distance from each other. Christ's dying is,

1. The great *attractive* of our hearts; for this end he is lifted up to draw men to him. The conversion of souls is the gathering of them in to Christ as their ruler and refuge, as the doves to their windows; and he died to effect this. By dying he purchased them to himself, and the gift of the Holy Ghost for them; his love in dying for us, is the great load-stone of our love.

2. The great *centre of our unity*. He gathers them together in one, Eph. i. 10. They are one with him, one body, one spirit, and one with each other in him. All the saints in all places and ages meet in Christ, as all the members in the head, and all the branches in the root. Christ by the *merit* of his death, recommended all the saints in one to the grace and favour of God, Heb. ii. 11, 13. And by the motive of his death recommends them all severally to the love and affection one of another, John xiii. 34.

4. The result of this debate is a resolve of the council to put Jesus to death, ver. 53. *From that day they took counsel together to put him to death*. They now understand one another's minds, and so each was fixed in his own, that Jesus must die; and it should seem a committee was appointed to sit, *de die in diem*, to consider of it, and consult about it, and to receive proposals for the effecting of it. Note, The wickedness of the wicked ripens by degrees, Jam. i. 15. Ezek. vii. 10.

Two considerable advances were now made in their accursed design against Christ. 1. What before they had thought of *severally*, now they *jointly* concurred in, and so strengthened the hands one of another in this wickedness, and proceeded with the greater assurance. Ill men confirm and encourage themselves and one another in ill practices, by *comparing notes*; men of *corrupt minds* bless themselves, when they find others of *the same mind*: Then the wickedness which before seemed impracticable, appears not only possible, but easy to be effected, *vis unita fortior*. 2. What before they wished done, but *wanted a colour for*, now they are furnished with a *plausible pretence* to justify themselves in, which will serve, if not to take off the guilt, that is the least of their care, yet to take off the odium, and so satisfy, if not the *personal*, yet the *political* conscience, as some subtilly distinguish. Many will go on very securely in doing an ill thing, as long as they have but something to say in excuse for it. Now this resolution of theirs to put him to death right or wrong, shews that all the formality of a trial which they afterwards brought him upon, was but shew and grimace, they were before determined what to do.

5. Christ hereupon absconded, knowing very well what was the vote of their close cabal, ver. 54.

1. He suspended his publick appearances, *he walked no more openly among the Jews*, i. e. among the inhabitants of Judea, who were properly called Jews, especially those at Jerusalem, *ἱεροσολίται*. He did not *walk up and down* among them, did not go from place to place preaching and working miracles with that freedom and openness that he had done, but while he staid in Judea, he was there *incognito*. Thus the chief priests put the light of Israel under a bushel.

2. He withdrew into an obscure part of the country, so obscure, that the name of the town he retired to, is scarce met with any where else. He went to a country *near the wilderness*, as if he were driven out from among men, or rather wishing with Jeremiah, that he might have in the wilderness a *lodging-place of way-faring men*, Jer. ix. 2. He entered into a city called Ephraim, some think Ephratah, i. e. Bethlehem, where he was born, and which bordered upon the wilderness of Judah; others think, Ephron, or Ephraim mentioned, 2 Chron. xiii. 19. Thither his *disciples* went with him, neither would they leave him in solitude, nor would he leave them in danger. There he continued, *διετρεξε*, there he *conversed*, he knew how to improve this time of retirement in private *conversation*, when he had not opportunity of preaching publicly. He *conversed with his disciples*, which were his family, when he was forced from the temple, and his *διάλεκται*, or discourses there, no doubt were very *edifying*. We must do the good we can, when we cannot do the good we would.

But why would Christ abscond now? it was not because he either feared the power of his enemies, or distrusted his own power; he had many ways to save himself, and was neither averse to suffering, nor unprepared for it; but he retired, (1.) To put a mark of his displeasure upon Jerusalem, and the people of the Jews. They re-

jected him and his gospel, justly therefore did he remove himself and his gospel from them. The prince of *teachers* was now *removed into a corner* (Isa. xxx. 20.) and there was *no open vision* of him, and it was a sad preface of that thick darkness, which was shortly to come upon Jerusalem, because she knew not the day of her visitation. (2.) To render the cruelty of his enemies against him the more inexcusable. If that which was grievous to them, and thought dangerous to the publick, was his *publick appearances*, he would try whether their anger would be turned away by his retirement into privacy; when David was fled to Gath, Saul was satisfied, and sought no more for him, 1 Sam. xxvii. 4. But it was the *life*, the precious *life*, that these wicked men hunted after. (3.) His hour was *not yet come*, and therefore he declined danger, and did it in a way common to men, both to warrant and encourage the flight of his servants in time of persecution, and to comfort those who are forced from their usefulness, and buried alive in privacy and obscurity; *the disciple is not better than his Lord*. (4.) His retirement for a while was to make his return into Jerusalem, when his hour was come, the more *remarkable* and *illustrious*. This loudened the acclamations of joy, with which his well-wishers welcomed him at his next publick appearance, when he rode triumphantly into the city.

6. The strict enquiry made for him during his recess, ver. 55, 56, 57.

1. The occasion of it was the approach of the passover, at which they expected his presence according to custom, ver. 55. *The Jews passover was nigh at hand*, a festival which shone bright in their calendar, and which there was great expectation of for some time before; this was Christ's fourth and last passover, since he entered upon his publick ministry, and it might truly be said, as, 2 Chron. xxxv. 18. *There never was such a passover in Israel*, for in it *Christ our passover was sacrificed for us*. Now the passover being at hand, *many went out of all parts of the country to Jerusalem, to purify themselves*. This was either, (1.) A *necessary purification* of those who had contracted any ceremonial pollution; they came to be sprinkled with the *water of purification*, and to perform the other rites of cleansing according to the law, for they might not eat the passover in their uncleanness, Numb. ix. 6. Thus before our gospel-passover we must renew our repentance, and by faith wash in the blood of Christ, and so *compass God's altars*. Or, (2.) A *voluntary purification*, or self-sequestration, by fasting and prayer, and other religious exercises, which many that were more devout than their neighbours, spent some time in before the passover, and chose to do it at Jerusalem, because of the advantage of the temple-service. Thus must we by solemn preparation set bounds about the mount on which we expect to meet with God.

2. The enquiry was very solicitous; *They said, what think ye, that he will not come to the feast?* ver. 56.

1. Some think this was said by those that wished well to him, and expected his coming, that they might hear his doctrine, and see his miracles. They that came early out of the country, that they might purify themselves, were very desirous to meet with Christ, and perhaps came up the sooner with that expectation, and therefore *as they stood in the temple*, the place of their purification, they enquired what news of Christ? Could any body give them hopes of seeing him? If there were those, and those of the most devout people, and best affected to religion, who shewed this respect to Christ, it was a *check* to the enmity of the chief priests, and a *witness* against them.

2. It should rather seem they were his enemies that made this enquiry after him, who wished for an opportunity to lay hands on him. They seeing the town begin to fill with *devout* people out of the country, wondered they did not find him among them; when they should have been assisting them that came to purify themselves, according to the duty of their place, they were plotting against Christ. How miserably degenerate was the Jewish church, when the priests of the Lord were become like the priests of the calves, a *snare on Mizpeh*, and a *net spread upon Tabor*, and were *profound to make slaughter*, Hof. v. 1, 2. when instead of keeping the feast with unleavened bread, they were themselves soured with the leaven of the worst malice? Their asking, *What think ye? Will he not come up to the feast?* implies, (1.) An invidious reflexion upon Christ, as if he would omit his attendance on the feast of the Lord, for fear of exposing himself. If others through irreligion be absent, they are not animadverted upon, but if Christ be absent for his own preservation (for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice) it is turned to his reproach, as it was to David's, that his seat was empty at the feast, though Saul wanted him only, that he might have an opportunity of nailing him to the wall with his javelin, 1 Sam. xx. 26, 27. It is sad to see holy ordinances prostituted to such unholy purposes. (2.) A fearful apprehension they had of missing their game. *Will he not come up to the feast?* If he do not, our measures are broke, and we are all undone; for there is no sending a pursuivant into the country to fetch him up.

3. The orders issued out by the government for the apprehending of him were very strict, ver. 57. The great Sanhedrin issued out a proclamation, strictly charging and requiring, that if any person in city or country *knew where he was*, pretending that he was a criminal, and had fled from justice, they should shew it, that he might be taken, probably promising a reward to any that would discover him, and imposing a penalty on such as harboured him. So that hereby he was represented to the people as an obnoxious, dangerous man, an out-law, whom any one may have a blow at. Saul issued



issued out such a proclamation for apprehending of David, and Ahab of Elijah. See, (1.) How intent they were upon this prosecution, and how indefatigably they laboured in it; now at a time when, if they had had any sense of religion, and the duty of their function, they would have found themselves something else to do. (2.) How willing they were to involve others in the guilt with them; if any man were capable of betraying Christ, they would have him think himself bound to do it. Thus was the interest they had in the people abused to the worst purposes. Note, It is an aggravation of the sins of wicked rulers, that they commonly make those that are under them, instruments of their unrighteousness. But notwithstanding this proclamation, though doubtless many knew where he was, yet such was his interest in the affections of some, and such God's hold of the consciences of others, that he continued undiscovered, for the Lord hid him.

C H A P. XII.

*It was a melancholy account which we had in the close of the foregoing chapter, of the disgrace done to our Lord Jesus, when the scribes and Pharisees proclaimed him a traitor to their church, and put upon him all the marks of ignominy they could; but the story of this chapter balanceth that, by giving us an account of the honour done to the Redeemer, notwithstanding all that reproach thrown upon him. Thus the one was set over against the other. Let us see what honours were heaped on the head of the Lord Jesus, even in the depths of his humiliation. (1.) Mary did him honour, by anointing his feet at the supper in Bethany, ver. 1—11. (2.) The common people did him honour with their acclamations of joy, when he rode in triumph into Jerusalem, ver. 12—19. (3.) The Greeks did him honour, by enquiring after him with a longing desire to see him, ver. 20—26. (4.) God the Father did him honour, by a voice from heaven, bearing testimony to him, ver. 27—36. (5.) He had honour done him by the Old Testament prophets, who foretold the infidelity of those that heard the report of him, ver. 37—41. (6.) He had honour done him by some of the chief rulers, whose consciences witnessed for him, though they had not courage to own it, ver. 42, 43. (7.) He claimed honour to himself, by asserting his divine mission, and the account he gave of his errand into the world, ver. 44—50.*

1. **T**HEN Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. 2. There they made him a supper and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 3. Then took Mary a pound of ointment, of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simons son, which should betray him, 5. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6. This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8. For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always. 9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. 10. ¶ But the chief priests consulted, that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11. Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

In these verses we have,

First, The kind visit our Lord Jesus made to his friends at Bethany, ver. 1. He came up out of the country, six days before the passover, and took up at Bethany, a town, that, according to the computation of our metropolis, lay so near Jerusalem, as to be within the bills of mortality. He lodged here with his friend Lazarus, whom he had lately raised from the dead. His coming to Bethany now may be considered,

1. As a preface to the passover he intended to celebrate, to which relation is had in the date of the time, Six days before the passover. Devout men set time apart before, to prepare themselves for that solemnity, and thus it became our Lord Jesus to fulfil all righteousness. And thus he hath set us an example of solemn self-sequestration, before the solemnities of the gospel-passover; let us hear the voice crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

2. As a voluntary exposing himself to the fury of his enemies; now his hour was at hand, he came within their reach, and freely offered himself to them, though he had shewed them how easily he could evade all their snares. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus was voluntary in his sufferings; his life was not forced from him, but resigned; Lo, I come. As the strength of his persecutors could not over-power him, so their subtilty could not surprize him, but he died, because he would. 2. As there is a time when we are allowed to shift for our own preservation, so there is a time when we are called to jeo-

pard our lives in the cause of God, as St. Paul, when he went bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem.

3. As an instance of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, whom he loved, and from whom he was shortly to be taken away. This was a farewell visit, he came to take leave of them, and to leave with them words of comfort against the day of trial that was approaching. Note, Though Christ depart for a time from his people, he will give them intimations that he parts in love, and not in anger. Bethany is here described to be the town, where Lazarus was, whom he raised from the dead. That miracle wrought here, put a new honour upon the place, and made it remarkable. Christ came hither to observe what improvement was made of that miracle; for where Christ works wonders, and shews signal favours, he looks after them to see whether the intention of them be answered. Where he has sown plentifully, he observes whether it comes up again.

Secondly, The kind entertainment which his friends there gave him; they made him a supper, ver. 2. a great supper, a feast. It is queried, whether this was the same with that which is recorded, Mat. xxvi. 6, &c. in the house of Simon; most think they were; for the substance of the story, and many of the circumstances agree; but that comes in after what was said two days before the passover, whereas this was done six days before; nor is it likely that Martha should serve in any house but her own; and therefore I incline with Dr. Lightfoot to think them different; that that in Matthew was on the third day of the passover week, but this here the seventh day of the week before, being the Jewish sabbath, the night before he rode in triumph into Jerusalem: That in the house of Simon, this of Lazarus; these two being the most publick and solemn entertainments given him in Bethany, Mary graced them both, with this token of her respect; and what she left of her ointment this first time, when she spent but a pound of it, ver. 3. she used that second time, when she poured it all out, Mark xiv. 3.

Let us see the account of this entertainment.

1. They made him a supper; for with them ordinarily supper was the best meal. This they did in token of their respect and gratitude, for a feast is made for friendship; and that they might have an opportunity of free and pleasant conversation with him, for a feast is made for fellowship. Perhaps in allusion to this and the like entertainments given to Christ in the days of his flesh, it is that he promiseth to such as open the door of their hearts to him, that he will sup with them, Rev. iii. 20.

2. Martha served, she herself waited at table, in token of her great respect to the Master; though a person of some quality, she did not think it below her to serve, when Christ sat at meat; nor should we think it a dishonour or disparagement to us to stoop to any service, whereby Christ may be honoured. Christ had formerly reproved Martha for being troubled with much serving. But she did not therefore leave off serving, as some, who when they are reproved for one extreme, peevishly run into another; no, still she served; not as then at a distance, but within hearing of Christ's gracious words, reckoning those happy, who, as the queen of Sheba said concerning Solomon's servants, stood continually before him to hear his wisdom; better be a waiter at Christ's table, than a guest at the table of a prince.

3. Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat. It proved the truth of his resurrection, as it did of Christ's, that there were those who did eat and drink with them, Acts x. 41. Lazarus did not retire into a wilderness after his resurrection, as if when he made a visit to the other world, he must ever after be a hermit in this; no, he conversed familiarly with people as others did. He sat at meat, as a monument of the miracle Christ had wrought. Those whom Christ has raised up to a spiritual life, are made to sit together with him. See Eph. ii. 5, 6.

Thirdly, The particular respect which Mary shewed him above the rest, in anointing his feet with sweet ointment, ver. 3. She had a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, which probably she had by her for her own use, but the death and resurrection of her brother had quite weaned her from the use of all such things, and with this she anointed the feet of Jesus, and as a further token of her reverence for him, and negligence of herself, she wiped them with her hair, and this was taken notice of by all that were present, for the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. See Prov. xxvii. 16.

Doubtless she intended this as a token of her love to Christ, who had given real tokens of his love to her and her family, and thus she studies what she shall render. Now by this her love to Christ appears to have been,

1. A generous love, so far from sticking at necessary charges in his service, that she is as ingenious to create an occasion of expence in religion, as most are to avoid it. If she had any thing more valuable than other, that must be brought out for the honour of Christ. Note, Those who love Christ truly, love him so much better than this world, as to be willing to lay out the best they have for him.

2. A condescending love. She not only bestowed her ointment upon Christ, but poured it upon him with her own hands, which she might have ordered one of her servants to have done; nay, she did not as usual anoint his head with it, but his feet. True love, as it doth not stick at charges, so it doth not stick at pains in honouring Christ. Considering what Christ has done, and suffered for us, we are very ungrateful, if we think any service too hard to do, or too mean to stoop to, whereby he may really be glorified.



3. A believing love; there was faith working by this love, faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, *i. e.* the Anointed, that being both priest and king, was anointed as Aaron and David were. Note, *God's anointed* should be *our anointed*; has God poured on him the oil of gladness above his fellows, let us pour on him the ointment of our best affections above all competitors, by consenting to Christ as our king, we must comply with God's designs, appointing him *our head* whom he has appointed, *Hof. i. 11.*

The filling of the house with the pleasant odor of the ointment may intimate to us, (1.) That those who entertain Christ in their hearts and houses bring a sweet odour into them; Christ's presence brings with it an ointment and perfume which rejoice the heart. (2.) Honours done to Christ are comforts to all his friends and followers; they are to God and good men an offering of a sweet smelling savour.

Fourthly, Judah's dislike of Mary's compliment, or token of her respect to Christ, *ver. 4, 5.* where observe,

1. The person that carped at it was Judas, *one of his disciples*; not one of their nature, but only one of their number: It is possible for the worst of men to lurk under the disguise of the best profession; and there are many who pretend to stand in relation to Christ, that really have no kindness for him. Judas an apostle, a preacher of the gospel, and yet one that discouraged and checked this instance of pious affection and devotion. Note, It is sad to see the life of religion, and holy zeal frowned upon and discountenanced by such as are obliged by their office to assist and encourage it. But this was he that should betray Christ. Note, Coldness of love to Christ, and a secret contempt of serious piety, when they appear in professors of religion, are sad presages of a final apostasy. Hypocrites, by lesser instances of worldliness, discover themselves to be ready for a closure with greater temptations.

2. The pretence with which he covered his dislike, *ver. 5. Why was not this ointment*, since it was designed for a pious use, sold for three hundred pence, which is 8 *l.* 10 *s.* of our money, and given to the poor? Here is, (1.) A foul iniquity gilded over with a specious and plausible pretence, for Satan transforms himself into an angel of light. (2.) Here is worldly wisdom passing a censure upon pious zeal, as guilty of imprudence and mismanagement. Those who value themselves upon their secular policy, and undervalue others for their serious piety, have more in them of the spirit of Judas than they would be thought to have. (3.) Here is charity to the poor made a colour for opposing a piece of piety to Christ, and secretly made a cloak for covetousness. Many excuse themselves from laying out in charity, under pretence of laying up for charity; whereas, if the clouds be full of rain they will empty themselves. Judas asked, *Why was it not given to the poor?* To which it is easy to answer, because it was better bestowed upon the Lord Jesus. Note, We must not conclude that those do no acceptable piece of service, who do not do it in our way, and just as we would have them; as if every thing must be adjudged imprudent and unfit, which doth not take its measures from us and our sentiments. Proud men think all ill-advised that do not advise with them.

3. The detection and discovery of Judas's hypocrisy herein, *ver. 6.* Here is the evangelist's remark upon it, by the direction of him who searcheth the heart. This he said, *not that he cared for the poor*, as he pretended, but because *he was a thief*, and had the bag.

1. It did not come from a principle of charity: *Not that he cared for the poor.* He had no compassion towards them, no concern for them; what were the poor to him, any further than he might serve his own ends, by being overseer of the poor? Thus some warmly contend for the power of the church, as others for its purity, when perhaps it may be said, not that they care for the church; it is all one to them whether its true interest sink or swim, but under the umbrage of this they are advancing themselves. Simeon and Levi pretended zeal for circumcision, *not that they cared for the seal of the covenant*, any more than Jehu for the Lord of hosts, when he said, *come, see my zeal.*

2. It did come from a principle of covetousness. The truth of the matter was, this ointment being designed for his Master, he would rather have had it in money, to be put in the common stock which he was intrusted with, and then he knew what to do with it. Observe,

1. Judas was treasurer of Christ's household, whence some think he was called *Iscaiot*, the bag-bearer.

(1.) See what estate Jesus and his disciples had to live upon; it was but little; they had neither farms nor merchandise, neither barns nor store-houses, only a bag; or, as some think, the word signifies a box, or coffer, wherein they kept just enough for their subsistence, giving the overplus, if any were, to the poor; this they carried about with them wherever they went; *omnia mea mecum porto.* This bag was supplied with the contributions of good people, and the Master and his disciples had all in common: let this lessen our esteem of worldly wealth, and deaden us to the punctilio's of state and ceremony, and reconcile us to a mean and despicable way of living, if that be our lot; that it was our Master's lot; for our sakes he became poor.

(2.) See who was the steward of the little they had, it was Judas, he was purse-bearer; it was his office to receive and pay, and we do not find that he gave any account what markets he made. He was appointed to this office, either, 1. Because he was the least and lowest of all the disciples; it was not Peter or John that was made steward, though it was a place of trust and profit, but Judas, the meanest of them. Note, Secular employments, as they are a diversion, so they

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are a diminution to a minister of the gospel; see 1 Cor. vi. 4. The prime ministers of state in Christ's kingdom refused to be concerned in the revenue, *Acts vi. 2.* 2. Because he was desirous of the place. He loved in his heart to be fingering money, and therefore had the money-bag committed to him, either, 1. As a kindness, to please him, and thereby oblige him to be true to his Master. Subjects are sometimes disaffected to the government, because balked in their preferment; but Judas had no cause to complain of that, the bag he chose, and the bag he had. Or, 2. In judgment upon him, to punish him for his secret wickedness, that was put into his hands, which would be a snare and trap to him. Note, Strong inclinations to sin within, are oftentimes justly punished with strong temptations to sin without: We have little reason to be fond of the bag, or proud of it, for at the best we are but stewards of it; and it was Judas, one of an ill character, and born to be hanged (pardon the expression) that was steward of the bag; the prosperity of fools destroys them.

2. Being trusted with the bag, he was a thief, *i. e.* he had a thievish disposition. The reigning love of money is heart-theft, as much as anger and revenge is heart-murder. Or, perhaps he had been really guilty of embezzling his Master's stores, and converting that to his own use which was given to the publick stock. And some conjecture that he was now contriving to fill his pockets, and then run away and leave his Master, having heard him speak so much of troubles approaching, which he could by no means reconcile himself to. Note, They to whom the management and disposal of publick money is committed, have need to be governed by steady principles of justice and honesty, that no blot cleave to their hands, for though some make a jest of cheating the government, or the church, or the country, if cheating be thieving, and communities being more considerable than particular persons, if robbing them be the greater sin, the guilt of theft, and the portion of thieves will be no jesting matter. Judas that had betrayed his trust, soon after betrayed his Master.

Fifthly, Christ's justification of what Mary did, *ver. 7, 8. Let her alone.* Hereby he intimated, (1.) His acceptance of her kindness. Though he was perfectly mortified to all the delights of sense, yet as it was a token of her good will he signified himself well-pleased with it. (2.) His care that she should not be molested in it. Pardon her, so it may be read; excuse her this once, if it be an error, it is an error of her love. Note, Christ would not have them censured or discouraged that sincerely design to please him, though in their honest endeavours there be not all the discretion that may be, *Rom. xiv. 3.* Though we would not do as they do, yet let them alone. For Mary's justification,

1. Christ puts a favourable construction upon what she did, which they that condemned it were not aware of. *Against the day of my burying she has kept this.* Or, *she hath reserved this for the day of my embalming*; so Dr. Hammond. You do not grudge the ointment used for the embalming of your dead friends, nor say, that should be sold and given to the poor. Now this anointing either was so intended, or at least may be so interpreted, for the day of my burying is now at hand, and she has anointed a body that is already as good as dead. Note. (1.) Our Lord Jesus thought much, and oft of his own death and burial; it would be good for us to do so too. (2.) Providence doth often so open a door of opportunity to good Christians; and the Spirit of grace doth so open their hearts, as that the expressions of their pious zeal proves to be more seasonable, and more beautiful than any foresight of their own could make them. (3.) The grace of Christ puts kind comments upon the pious words and actions of good people, and not only makes the best of what is amiss, but makes the most of what is good.

2. He gives a sufficient answer to Judas's objection, *ver. 8.* (1.) It is so ordered in the kingdom of providence that the poor we have always with us, some or other that are proper objects of charity, *Deut. xv. 11.* such there will be as long as there is in this lapsed state of mankind so much folly and so much affliction. (2.) It is so ordered in the kingdom of grace, that the church should not always have the bodily presence of Jesus Christ, *Me ye have not always*, but only now for a little time. Note, We need wisdom when two duties come in competition, to know which to give the preference to, which must be determined by the circumstances. Opportunities are to be improved, and those opportunities first and most vigorously which are likely to be of the shortest continuance, and which we see most speedily hastening away. That good duty which may be done at any time, ought to give way to that which cannot be done but just now.

Sixthly, The publick notice which was taken of our Lord Jesus here at this supper in Bethany, *ver. 9. Much people of the Jews knew that he was there*, for he was the talk of the town, and they came flocking thither; the more because he had lately absconded, and now broke out as the sun from behind a dark cloud.

1. They came to see Jesus, whose name was very much greatened, and made considerable by the late miracle he had wrought in raising Lazarus. They came not to hear him, but to gratify their curiosity with a sight of him here at Bethany, fearing he would not appear publicly as he used to do this passover. They came not to seize him, or inform against him, though the government had prosecuted him to an out-lawry, but to see him, and shew him respect. Note, There are some in whose affections Christ will have an interest in spite of all the attempts of his enemies to misrepresent him. It



being known where Christ was, multitudes came to him. Note, Where the king is there is, the court; where Christ is, there will the gathering of the people be, Luke xvii. 37.

2. They came to see Lazarus and Christ together, which was a very inviting sight. Some came for the confirmation of their faith in Christ, to have the story perhaps from Lazarus's own mouth. Others came only for the gratifying of their curiosity, that they might say they had *seen a man* who had been dead and buried, and yet lived again; so that Lazarus served for a *shew* these holydays, to these, who, like the Athenians, spent their time in telling and hearing *new things*. Perhaps some came to put curious questions to Lazarus about the state of the dead, to ask what news from the other world; we our selves have sometimes said, it may be, we would have gone a great way for one hour's discourse with Lazarus: But if any came on this errand, it is probable Lazarus was silent, and gave them no account of his voyage; however, the scripture is silent, and gives us no account of it; and we must not covet to be wise above what is written. But our Lord Jesus was present, who was a much fitter person for them to apply to than Lazarus, for if we hear not Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles; if we heed not what they tell us concerning another world, neither would we be persuaded though Lazarus rose from the dead. We have a more sure word of prophecy.

Seventhly, The indignation of the chief priests at the growing interest of our Lord Jesus, and their plot to crush it, *ver. 10, 11*. They consulted (or decreed) *how they might put Lazarus also to death*, because that *by reason of him*, i. e. of what was done to him, not of any thing he said or did, *many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus*. Here observe,

1. How *vain* and *unsuccessful* their attempts against Christ had hitherto been. They had done all they could to *alienate* the people from him, and *exasperate* them against him, and yet many of the Jews, their neighbours, their creatures, their admirers, were so overcome by the convincing evidence of Christ's miracles, that they *went away* from the interest and party of the priests; went off from obedience to their tyranny, and *believed on Jesus*. And it was by reason of Lazarus, his resurrection put life into their faith, and convinced them that this Jesus was undoubtedly the Messiah, and had life in himself, and power to give life. This miracle confirmed them in the belief of his other miracles which they had heard he wrought in Galilee; what was impossible to him that could raise the dead?

2. How *absurd* and *unreasonable* this day's vote was, that Lazarus must be put to death. This is an instance of the most brutish rage that could be, they were like a *wild bull in a net*, full of fury, and laying about them without any consideration: It was a sign they neither *feared God* nor *regarded man*. For,

1. If they had *feared God* they would not have done such an act of *defiance* to him. God will have Lazarus to live by *miracle*, and they will have him to die by *malice*. They cry, *Away with such a fellow*, it is not *fit he should live*, when God had so lately sent him back to the earth, declaring it *highly fit* he should live; what was this but *walking contrary to God*? They would put Lazarus to death, and challenge almighty power to raise him again, as if they could contend with God, and try titles with the King of kings? Who has the keys of death and the grave, he or they? *O cæca malitia! Christus qui suscitare potuit mortuum, non possit occisum?* Aug. in loc. Lazarus is singled out to be the object of their special hatred, because God has distinguished him by the tokens of his peculiar love, as if they had made a league offensive and defensive with death and hell, and resolved to be severe upon all deserters. One would think they should rather have consulted *how they might have joined in friendship* with Lazarus and his family, and by their mediations have reconciled themselves to this Jesus whom they had persecuted; but the God of this world had *blinded their minds*.

2. If they had *regarded man* they would not have done such an act of injustice to Lazarus, an innocent man, to whose charge they could not pretend to lay any crime. What bands are strong enough to hold those who can so easily break through the most sacred ties of common justice, and violate the maxims which even nature itself teacheth? But the support of their own tyranny and superstition were thought sufficient, as in the church of Rome, not only to justify, but to consecrate the greatest villainies, and make them *meritorious*.

12. ¶ On the next day, much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13. Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, *Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord*. 14. And Jesus when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, 15. Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold thy King cometh, sitting on an asses colt. 16. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him. 17. The people therefore that was with him, when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. 18. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19. The Pharisees therefore said among them-

selves, *Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold the world is gone after him*.

This story of Christ's riding in triumph to Jerusalem is recorded by all the evangelists, as worthy of special remark; and in it we may observe,

First, The respects that were paid to our Lord Jesus by the common people, *ver. 12, 13*. where we are told,

1. Who they were that paid him these respects, *much people, ὄχλος πολὺς*, a great crowd of those that came up to the feast; not the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the country people that came from remote parts to worship at the feast; the *nearer* the temple of the Lord, the *further* from the Lord of the temple. They were such as *came up to the feast*. (1.) Perhaps they had been Christ's hearers in the country, and great admirers of him there, and therefore were forward to testify their respects to him at Jerusalem, where they knew he had many enemies. Note, Those that have a true value and veneration for Christ, will neither be ashamed nor afraid to own him before men in any instance whereby they may do him honour. (2.) Perhaps they were those more *devout Jews* that came up to the feast some time before to purify themselves; that were more inclined to religion than their neighbours, and those were they that were so forward to honour Christ. Note, The more regard men have to God and religion in general, the better disposed they will be to entertain Christ and *his* religion, which is not *destructive*, but *perfective* of all previous discoveries and institutions. They were not the rulers, or the great men that went out to meet Christ, but the commonalty; some would have called them a mob, a rabble; but Christ has chosen the weak and foolish things, 1 Cor. i. 27. and is honoured more by the multitude than by the magnificence of his followers, for he values men by their souls, not their names and titles of honour.

2. On what occasion they did it, *They heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem*. They had enquired for him, *chap. xi. 55, 56*. *Will he not come up to the feast?* And now they hear he is coming, for none that seek Christ, seek in vain. Now when they heard he was coming, they bestirred themselves to give him an agreeable reception. Note, Tidings of the approach of Christ and his kingdom should awaken us to consider what is the work of the day, that it may be done in the day. Israel must prepare to meet *their God*, Amos iv. 12. and the virgins to *meet the bridegroom*.

3. In what way they expressed their respects; they had not the keys of the city to present him, nor the sword or mace to carry before him, none of the city musick to compliment him with, but such as they had they gave him; and even this despicable crowd was a faint resemblance of that glorious company which John saw, *before the throne, and before the Lamb*, Rev. vii. 9, 10. Though these were not before the throne, they were before the *Lamb*, the paschal lamb, who now according to the usual ceremony, *four days* before the feast, was set apart to be sacrificed for us. There it is said of that celestial choir,

1. That they had *palms* in their hands, and so had these *branches of palm-trees*. The *palm-tree* has ever been an emblem of victory and triumph; Cicero calls one that had won many prizes, *plurimarum palmarum homo*. Christ was now by his death to conquer principalities and powers, and therefore it was fit he should have the victor's palm born before him; though he was but girding on the harness, yet he could boast as though he had put it off. But this was not all, the carrying of palm-branches was part of the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles, *Lev. xxiii. 40*. *Neh. viii. 15*. and their using of this expression of joy in the welcome given to our Lord Jesus, intimates, that all the feasts pointed at his gospel, had their accomplishment in it, and particularly that of the feast of tabernacles, *Zech. xiv. 16*.

2. That they *cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God*, Rev. vii. 10. so did these here, they shouted before him as is usual in popular welcomes, *Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord*; and *hosanna* signifies *salvation*. It is fetched from *Psal. cxviii. 25, 26*. See how well acquainted these common people were with the scripture, and how pertinently they apply it to the Messiah. High thoughts of Christ will be best expressed in scripture words. Now in their acclamations,

1. They acknowledge our Lord Jesus to be the King of Israel, that comes *in the name of the Lord*. Though he went now in poverty and disgrace, yet, contrary to the notions their scribes had given them of the Messiah, they own him to be a *King*, which speaks both his dignity and honour, which we must adore; and his dominion and power, which we must submit to. They own him to be, 1. A rightful King, coming *in the name of the Lord*, *Psal. ii. 6*. sent of God, not only as a *prophet*, but as a *king*. 2. The promised and long expected King, Messiah, the Prince, for he is *King of Israel*. According to the light they had, they proclaimed him king of Israel in the streets of Jerusalem; and they themselves being Israelites, hereby they avouched him for *their king*.

2. They heartily wish well to his kingdom, that is the meaning of *hosanna*; let the King of Israel prosper, as when Solomon was crowned, they cried, *God save king Solomon*, 1 Kings i. 38. In crying *hosanna* they prayed for three things. (1.) That his kingdom might *come*, in the light and knowledge of it, and in the power and efficacy of it. God speed the gospel-plough. (2.) That it might *conquer*, and be victorious over all opposition, *Rev. vi. 2*.

3. That



(3.) That it might *continue*. Hofanna is, *Let the king live for ever*; though his kingdom may be disturbed, let it never be destroyed, *Psal. lxxii. 17.*

3. They bid him welcome into Jerusalem; welcome as they might say; *welcome is he that cometh*; we are heartily glad to see him; *come in, thou blessed of the Lord*: and well may we attend him with our blessings, who meets us with his. This welcome is like that, *Psal. xxiv. 7, 9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates.* Thus we must every one of us bid Christ welcome into our hearts, that is, we must *praise* him, and be well *pleased* in him. As we should be highly pleased with the being and attributes of God, and his relations to us, so we should be with the person and offices of the Lord Jesus, and his mediation between us and God. Faith faith, *Blessed is he that comes.*

Secondly, The posture Christ put himself into for the receiving of the respects that were paid him; *ver. 14. When he had found, or procured, a young ass, he sat thereon*; it was but a poor sort of figure he made, he alone upon an ass, and a crowd of people about him shouting Hofanna.

1. This was much *more of state* than he used to take, he used to travel on foot, but now was mounted. Though his followers should be willing to take up with mean things, and not affect any thing that looks like grandeur, yet it is allowed them to use the service of the inferior creatures, according as God in his providence gives particular possession of that, over which, by his covenant with Noah and his sons, he has given to man a general dominion.

2. Yet it was much *less of state* than the great ones of the world use to take. If he would have made a publick entry, according to the state of a man of high degree, he should have rode in a chariot like that of Solomon's, *Cant. iii. 9, 10. With pillars of silver, the bottom of gold, and the covering of purple*; but if we judge according to the fashion of this world, to be introduced thus, was rather a disparagement than any honour to the King of Israel, for it seemed as if he *would look great*, and knew not *how*. His kingdom was not of this world, and therefore came not with outward pomp. He was now humbling him, but in his exalted state John sees him in vision *on a white horse, with a bow and a crown.*

Thirdly, The fulfilling of the scripture in this, *As it is written, fear not, daughter of Sion*, *ver. 15.* This is quoted from *Zech. ix. 9.* To him bare all the prophets witness, and particularly to this concerning him.

1. It was foretold that Sion's king should come, should come *thus, sitting on an ass's colt*; even the minute circumstance was foretold, and Christ took care it should be punctually fulfilled. Note, 1. Christ is Sion's King; the holy hill of Sion was of old destined to be the metropolis, or royal city of the Messiah. 2. Sion's King doth, and will, look after her, and *come to her*; though for a short time he *retires*, in due time he *returns*. 3. Though he comes but slowly, an ass is slow-paced, yet he comes surely, and with such expressions of humility and condescension, as greatly encourage the addresses and expectations of his loyal subjects. Humble supplicants may reach to speak with him. If this be a discouragement to Sion, that her King appears in no greater state, or strength, let her know, that though he comes to her riding on an ass's colt, yet he goes forth against her enemies riding *on the heavens for her help*, *Deut. xxxiii. 26.*

2. The daughter of Sion is therefore called upon to *behold her King*, to take notice of him and his approaches; behold and *wonder*, for he comes with *observation*, though not with *outward shew*, *Cant. iii. 11. Fear not.* In the prophecy, Sion is bid to *rejoice greatly*, and to *shout*, but here it is rendered, *fear not*; unbelieving fears are enemies to spiritual joys; if they be cured, if they be conquered, joy will come of course; therefore Christ comes to his people to *silence* their fears. If the case be so that we cannot reach to the exultations of joy, yet we should labour to get from under the oppressions of fear. *Rejoyce greatly, at least fear not.*

Fourthly, The remark made by the evangelist upon the disciples understanding of this, *ver. 16. They understood not at first why Christ did this, and how the scripture was fulfilled, but when Jesus was glorified, and thereupon the Spirit poured out, then they remembered that these things were written of him in the Old Testament, and that they and others had, in pursuance thereof, done these things to him.*

1. See here the *imperfection* of the disciples now in their infant state, even they *understood not these things at first*; did not consider when they fetched him the ass, and set him thereon, that they were performing the ceremony of the inauguration of Sion's King. Now observe, (1.) The scripture is often fulfilled by the agency of those who have not themselves an eye to the scripture in what they do, *Isa. xlv. 4.* (2.) There are many excellent things, both in the word and providence of God, which the disciples themselves do not at first understand; not at their first acquaintance with the things of God, while they *see men as trees walking*; not at the first proposal of the things to their view and consideration. That which afterwards is clear, at first was dark and doubtful. (3.) It well becomes the disciples of Christ when they are grown up to maturity in knowledge, frequently to reflect upon the follies and weaknesses of their first beginning, that free grace may have the glory of their proficiency, and they may have compassion on the ignorant. *When I was a child, I spake as a child.*

2. See here the *improvement* of the disciples in their adult state. Though they had been children, they were not always so, but went on to perfection. Observe,

1. When they understood it; *when Jesus was glorified*; for, 1. *Till then* they did not rightly apprehend the nature of his kingdom, but expected it to appear in external pomp and power, and therefore knew not how to apply the scriptures which spoke of it to so mean an appearance. Note, The right understanding of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, of its powers, glories, and victories, would prevent our misinterpreting and misapplying the scriptures that speak of it. 2. *Till then* the Spirit was not poured out, who was to lead them into all truth. Note, The disciples of Christ are enabled to understand the scriptures by the same Spirit that indited the scriptures. *The Spirit of revelation is to all the saints a Spirit of wisdom*, *Eph. i. 17, 18.*

2. How they understood it; they compared that prophecy with the event, and put them together, that they might mutually receive light from each other, and so they came to understand both. *They remembered they that these things were written of him* by the prophets, consonant to which they were done to him. Note, Such an admirable harmony there is between the word and works of God, that the remembrance of what is *written*, will enable us to understand what is *done*; and the observation of what is done will help us to understand what is written. *As we have heard, so have we seen.* The scripture is every day in the fulfilling.

Fifthly, The reason which induced the people to pay this respect to our Lord Jesus upon his coming into Jerusalem, though the government was so much set against him: It was because of that illustrious miracle he had lately wrought in raising Lazarus.

1. See here what *account*, and what *assurance* they had of this miracle; no doubt the city rang of it, the report of it was in all peoples mouths. But they who considered it as a proof of Christ's mission, and a ground of their faith in him, that they might be well satisfied of the matter of fact, traced the report to those who were eye-witnesses of it, that they might *know the certainty* of it by the utmost evidence the thing was capable of. *The people therefore that stood by when he called Lazarus out of his grave, being found out and examined, bare record*, *ver. 17.* They unanimously averred the thing to be true, beyond dispute or contradiction, and were ready, if called to it, to depose it upon oath, for so much is implied in the word, *ἑμαρτυρεν*. Note, The truth of Christ's miracles was evidenced by incontestable proofs. It is probable those who had seen this miracle, did not only assert it to those that asked them, but published it *unasked*, that this might add to the triumphs of this solemn day; and Christ's coming in now from Bethany, where it was done, would put them in mind of it. Note, They who wish well to Christ's kingdom, should be forward to proclaim what they know that may redound to his honour.

2. What improvement they made of it, and what influence it had upon them, *ver. 18. For this cause*, as much as any other, *the people met him.* (1.) Some out of curiosity were desirous to see one that had done such a wonderful work. Many a good sermon he had preached in Jerusalem, which drew not such crowds after him as this one miracle did. But, (2.) Others, out of conscience, studied to do him honour as one sent of God. This miracle was reserved for one of the last, that it might confirm those which went before, and might gain him this honour just before his sufferings; Christ's works were all not only *well done* (Mark vii. 37.) but *well timed*.

Sixthly, The indignation of the Pharisees at all this; some of them probably *saw*, and they all soon *heard* of Christ's publick entry. The committee appointed to find out expedients to crush him, thought they had gained their point when he was retired into privacy, and that he would soon be forgotten in Jerusalem, but now *rage and fret* when they see they imagined but a *vain thing*.

1. They own that *they had got no ground* against him; it was plainly to be perceived that they *prevailed nothing*: They could not with all their insinuations, alienate the peoples affections from him, nor with their menaces restrain them from shewing their affection to him. Note, They who oppose Christ, and fight against his kingdom, will be made to perceive that they prevail nothing. God will accomplish his own purposes in spite of them, and the little efforts of their impotent malice. *Ye prevail nothing, ἐκ ἀφελείας, you profit nothing.* Note, There is nothing got by opposing Christ.

2. They own that he had *got ground*: *The world is gone after him*; there is a vast crowd attending him, a *world of people*; an hyperbole common in most languages. Yet here, like Caiaphas, ere they were aware, they prophesied that *the world would go after him*; some of all sorts, some from all parts; *nations shall be discipled*. But to what intent was this said? (1.) Thus they *express* their own vexation at the growth of his interest; their envy makes them fret. If the *horn of the righteous be exalted with honour*, the *wicked see it, and are grieved*, *Psal. cxii. 9, 10.* considering how great these Pharisees were, and what abundance of respect was paid them, one would think they needed not grudge Christ so *inconsiderable* a piece of honour as was now done him; but proud men would monopolize honour, and have none share with them, like Haman. (2.) Thus they excite themselves, and one another, to a more vigorous carrying on of the war against Christ. As if they should say, dallying and delaying thus will never do. We must take some other and more



more effectual course, to put a stop to this infection ; it is time to try our utmost skill and force before the grievance grows past redress. Thus the enemies of religion are made more resolute and active, by being baffled ; and shall its friends be disheartened with every disappointment, who know its cause is *righteous*, and will at last be *victorious* ?

20. ¶ And there were certain Greeks among them, that came up to worship at the feast : 21. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. 22. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew : and again, Andrew and Philip told Jesus. 23. ¶ And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. 24. Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25. He that loveth his life shall lose it : and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. 26. If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be : if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

Honour is here done to Christ by certain Greeks that enquired for him with respect. We are not told what day of Christ's last week this was, probably not the same day he rode into Jerusalem, for that day was taken up in publick work, but a day or two after.

First, We are told who they were that did this honour to our Lord Jesus ; *certain Greeks among the people, who came up to worship at the feast*, ver. 20. Some think they were *Jews of the dispersion*, some of the twelve tribes that were scattered among the Gentiles, and were called Greeks, Hellenist Jews ; but others think they were Gentiles, those whom they called *proselytes of the gate*, such as the eunuch, and Cornelius. Pure natural religion met with the best assistance among the Jews, and therefore those among the Gentiles, who were piously inclined, joined with them in their solemn meetings, as far as was allowed them. There were devout worshippers of the true God, even among them that were strangers to the common-wealth of Israel. It was in the latter ages of the Jewish church, that there was this flocking of the Gentiles to the temple at Jerusalem ; a happy presage of the taking down of the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles. The forbidding of the priests to accept of any oblation or sacrifice from a Gentile (which was done by Eleazar the son of Ananias, the high-priest) Josephus saith, was one of those things that brought the Romans upon them, *De Bell. Jud. lib. 2. cap. 30.* Though these Greeks, if uncircumcised, were not admitted to eat the passover, yet they came to *worship, at the feast*. We must thankfully use the privileges we have, though there may be others, from which we are shut out.

Secondly, What was the honour they did him, they desired to be acquainted with him, ver. 21. Being come to worship at the feast, they desired to make the best use they could of their time, and therefore applied themselves to Philip, desiring that he would put them in a way to get some personal converse with the Lord Jesus.

1. Having a desire to see Christ, they were industrious in the use of proper means. They did not conclude it impossible, because he was so much crowded to get to speak with him, nor rest in bare wishes, but resolved to try what could be done. Note, They that would have the knowledge of Christ must seek it.

2. They made their application to Philip, one of his disciples. Some think they had acquaintance with him formerly, and that they lived near Bethsaida in Galilee of the Gentiles ; and then it teacheth us that we should improve our acquaintance with good people, for our increase in the knowledge of Christ. It is good to know those who know the Lord. But if these Greeks had been near Galilee, it is probable they would have attended Christ there, where he mostly resided, therefore I think they applied themselves to him, only because they saw him a close follower of Christ, and he was the first they could get to speak with. It was an instance of the veneration they had for Christ, that they made an interest with one of his disciples, for an opportunity to converse with him ; a sign they looked upon him as some great one, though he appeared mean. Those that would see Jesus by faith, now he is in heaven, must apply themselves to his ministers, whom he hath appointed for this purpose, to guide poor souls in their enquiries after him. Paul must send for Ananias, and Cornelius for Peter. The bringing of these Greeks to the knowledge of Christ by the means of Philip, signified the *agency* of the apostles, and the use made of their ministry in the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith, and the discipling of the nations.

3. Their address to Philip was, in short, this, *Sir, we would see Jesus*. They give him a title of respect, as one worthy of honour, because he was in relation to Christ. Their business is, they would see Jesus ; not only see his face, that they might be able to say when they came home, they had seen one that was so much talked of ; it is likely they had seen him when he appeared publicly ; but they would have some free conversation with him, and be taught by him, which it was no easy thing to find him at leisure for, his hands were so full of publick work. Now they were come to wor-

ship at the feast they would see Jesus. Note, In our attendance upon holy ordinances, and particularly the gospel-passover, the great desire of our souls should be to see Jesus ; to have our acquaintance with him increased, our dependence on him encouraged, our conformity to him carried on ; to see him as ours, to keep up communion with him, and derive communications of grace from him ; we miss of our end in coming, if we do not see Jesus.

4. Here is the report which Philip made of this to his Master, ver. 22. He tells Andrew, who was of Bethsaida likewise ; and was a *senior fellow* in the college of the apostles, co-temporary with Peter, and consults him what was to be done ; whether he thought the motion would be acceptable or no, because Christ had sometimes said, that he was *not sent but to the house of Israel*. They agree it must be made ; but then he would have Andrew go along with him, remembering the favourable acceptance Christ had promised them, in case *two of them should agree, touching any thing they should ask*, Matt. xviii. 19. Note, Christ's ministers should be helpful to one another, and concur in helping souls to Christ. *Two are better than one*. It should seem Andrew and Philip brought this message to Christ, when he was teaching in publick, for we read, ver. 29, of the *people that stood by* ; but he was seldom alone.

Thirdly, Christ's acceptance of this honour done him, signified by what he said to the people hereupon, ver. 23, &c. where he foretels both the honour which he himself should have in being followed, ver. 23, 24. And the honour which they should have that followed him, ver. 25, 26. This was intended for the direction and encouragement of these Greeks, and all others that desired acquaintance with him.

1. He foresees that plentiful harvest in the conversion of the Gentiles, which this was, as it were, the first fruits of, ver. 23. Christ said to those two disciples, who spake a good word for those Greeks, but doubted whether they should speed or no ; *The hour is come, when the Son of man shall be glorified* ; by the accession of the Gentiles to the church, and in order to that, he must be rejected of the Jews. Observe,

(1.) The end designed hereby, and that is the *glorifying* of the Redeemer. And is it so ? Do the Gentiles begin to enquire after me ? Doth the morning-star appear to them, and that blessed *day-spring*, which knows its place, and time too, doth that begin to *take hold of the ends of the earth* ? Then the hour is come for the *glorifying of the Son of man*. This was no *surprize* to Christ, but a paradox to those about him. Note, 1. The calling, the effectual calling of the Gentiles into the church of God, greatly redounded to the glory of the Son of man. The multiplying of the redeemed, was the magnifying of the Redeemer. 2. There was a time, a set time, an hour, a certain hour, for the glorifying of the Son of man, which did come at last, when the days of his humiliation were numbered and finished, and he speaks of the approach of it with exultation and triumph ; *The hour is come*.

(2.) The strange way in which this end was to be attained, and that was by the death of Christ, intimated in that similitude, ver. 24. *Verily, verily I say unto you, you, to whom I have spoken of my death and sufferings, that except a corn of wheat fall, not only to, but into the ground and die, and be buried and lost, it abideth alone, and you never see any more of it ; but if it die according to the course of nature, otherwise it would be a miracle, it bringeth forth much fruit*. God giving to every seed its own body. Christ is this corn of wheat, the most valuable useful grain. Now here is,

1. The necessity of Christ's humiliation intimated. He had never been the living quickening head and root of the church, if he had not descended from heaven to this accursed earth, and ascended from earth to the accursed tree, and so accomplished our redemption. He must *pour out his soul unto death*, else he cannot *divide a portion with the great*, Isa. liii. 12. He shall have a seed given him, but he must shed his blood to *purchase* them and *purify* them, must *win* them, and *wear* them. It was necessary likewise, as a qualification for that glory, which he was to have by the accession of multitudes to his church ; for if he had not by his sufferings made satisfaction for sin, and so brought in an everlasting righteousness, he had not been sufficiently provided for the entertainment of those that should come to him, and therefore must *abide alone*.

2. The advantage of Christ's humiliation illustrated. He *fell to the ground* in his incarnation, seemed to be buried alive in this earth, so much was his glory veiled ; but that was not all, *he died*, this immortal seed submitted to the laws of mortality, he lay in the grave like seed under the clods ; but as the seed comes up again green and fresh, and flourishing, and with a great increase ; so one *dying Christ* gathered to himself thousands of *living Christians*, and he became their root. The salvation of souls hitherto, and henceforward to the end of time, is all owing to the dying of this *corn of wheat*. Hereby the Father and Son are glorified, the church replenished, the mystical body kept up, and will at length be compleated ; and when time shall be no more, the captain of our salvation, *bringing many sons to glory*, by the virtue of his death, and being so made perfect by sufferings, shall be celebrated for ever with the admiring praises of saints and angels, Heb. ii. 10, 13.

2. He foretels and promises an abundant recompence to them, who should cordially embrace him and his gospel, and interest, and should make it appear they do so by their faithfulness, in *suffering for him*, or in *serving of him*.



1. In *suffering for him*. Ver. 25. *He that loves his life better than Christ shall lose it*, but he that hates *his life in this world*, and prefers the favour of God, and an interest in Christ before it, shall *keep it unto life eternal*. This doctrine Christ much insisted on, it being the great design of his religion to wean us from this world, by setting before us another world.

1. See here the fatal consequence of an inordinate love of life; many a man *hugs himself* to death, and loseth his life by *over-loving* it. He that so loves his *animal* life as to indulge his appetite, and make *provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*, shall thereby shorten his days; shall lose the life he is so fond of, and another infinitely better. He that is so much in love with the life of the body, and the ornaments and delights of it, as for fear of exposing it or them, to deny Christ, he shall *lose it*, i. e. lose a *real* happiness in the other world, while he thinks to secure an *imaginary* one in this. *Skin for skin* a man may give for his life, and make a good bargain, but he that gives his soul, his God, his heaven for it, buys life too dear, and is guilty of his folly who sold a *birth-right* for a *mess of pottage*.

2. See also the blessed recompence of a holy contempt of life. He that so hates the life of the body as to venture that for the preserving of the life of his soul, shall find both with unspeakable advantage in eternal life. Note, (1.) It is required of the disciples of Christ, that they hate *their life in this world*; a life in *this world* supposeth a life in the other world, and *this* is *hated* when it is loved less than *that*. Our *life in this world* includes all the enjoyments of our present state, riches, honours, pleasures, and long life in the possession of them; these we must *hate*, i. e. *despise* them as vain and insufficient to make us happy; dread the temptations that are in them, and cheerfully part them whenever they come in competition with the service of Christ, *Acts* xx. 24.—xxi. 13. *Rev.* xii. 11. See here much of the *power of godliness*, that it conquers the strongest natural affections, and much of the *mystery of godliness*, that it is the greatest wisdom, and yet makes men hate their own lives. (2.) Those who in love to Christ hate their own lives in this world, shall be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just. *He that hateth his life shall keep it*, i. e. he puts it into the hands of one that will *keep it to life eternal*, and restore it with as great an improvement as the heavenly life can make of the earthly one.

2. In *serving of him*. Ver. 26. *If any man profess to serve me*, let him *follow me*, as a servant doth his master, and *where I am*, *ἐκεῖ ὁ δὲ δούλος ὁ ἐμὸς ἔσται*, there let my servant be, so some read it as part of the duty, there let him be to attend upon me; we read it as part of the promise, *there shall he be* in happiness with me: And lest this should seem a small matter, he adds, *If any man serve me him will my Father honour*, and that is enough, more than enough. The Greeks desired to see Jesus, ver. 21. but Christ lets them know, it was not enough to see him, they must *serve him*. He did not come into the world to be a *show* for us to gaze at, but a king to be ruled by. And he saith this for the encouragement of those who enquired after him to become his servants. In taking servants it is usual to fix both the *work* and the *wages*; Christ doth both here.

1. Here is the *work* which Christ expects from his servants, and it is very easy and reasonable, and such as becomes them.

(1.) Let them attend their Master's motions; *If any man serve me, let him follow me*. Christians must *follow* Christ, follow his methods and prescriptions, *do the things that he saith*; follow his example and pattern, *walk as he also walked*; follow his conduct by his providence and Spirit: We must go whither he leads us, and in the way he leads us; must follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes before us. If any man *serve me*, i. e. if he put himself into that relation to me, let him apply himself to the business of my service, and be always ready at my call. Or, If any man do indeed *serve me*, let him make an open and publick profession of his relation to me by following me, as the servant owns his Master by following him in the streets.

(2.) Let them attend their Master's repose; *where I am*, *there let my servant be* to wait upon me, Christ is where his church is, in the assemblies of his saints, where his ordinances are administered, and *there let his servants be*, to present themselves before him, and receive instructions from him. Or, *where I am to be* in heaven, whither I am now going, there let the thoughts and affections of my servants be, there let their conversation be, *where Christ sitteth*, Col. iii. 1, 2.

2. Here is the *wages* which Christ promiseth to his servants, and it is very rich and noble.

1. They shall be *happy* with him; *where I am there shall also my servant be*. To be *with him* when he was here in poverty and disgrace would seem but poor preferment, and therefore doubtless he means being with him *in paradise*, sitting with him *at his table* above on his throne there; it is the happiness of heaven to be with Christ there, *John* xvii. 24. Christ speaks of heaven's happiness as if he were already in it, *where I am*; because he was sure of it, and near to it, and it was still *upon his heart*, and *in his eye*. And the same joy and glory which he thought recompence enough for all his services and sufferings, is proposed to his servants as the recompence of theirs. They that *follow him* in the way, shall be *with him* in the end.

2. They shall be *honoured* by his Father; he will make them amends for all their pains and loss, by conferring an honour upon them, such as becomes a great God to give, but far beyond what such worthless worms of the earth could expect to receive. The rewarder is *God himself*, who takes the services done to the Lord Jesus

as done to himself. The reward is *honour*, true lasting honour, the highest honour; it is the honour that comes from God. It is said, *Prov.* xxvii. 18. *He that waits on his master (humbly and diligently) shall be honoured*. Those that wait on Christ God will put honour upon, such as will be taken notice of another day, though now under a veil. They that serve Christ must humble themselves, and are commonly vilified by the world, in recompence of both which they shall be exalted in due time. Thus far Christ's discourse has reference to those Greeks, who desired to *see him*, encouraging them to serve him; what became of those Greeks we are not told, but are willing to hope that they who thus asked the way to heaven with their faces thitherward, found it, and walked in it.

27. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. 28. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. 29. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundred: others said, An angel spake to him. 30. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. 31. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33. (This he said, signifying what death he should die) 34. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lift up? who is this Son of man? 35. Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. 36. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Honour is here done to Christ by his Father in a voice from heaven, occasioned by the following part of his discourse, and which gave occasion to a further conference with the people. In these verses we have,

First, Christ's address to his Father upon occasion of the trouble which seized his spirit at this time, ver. 27. *Now is my soul troubled*. A strange word to come from Christ's mouth, and at this time surprising, for it cometh in the midst of divers pleasing prospects, in which one would think he should have said, now is my soul *pleased*. Note, Trouble of soul sometimes follows after great enlargements of spirit. In this world of mixture and change we must expect damps upon our joy, and the highest degree of comfort to be the next degree to trouble: When Paul had been in the *third heavens* he had a *thorn in the flesh*. Observe,

1. Christ's dread of his approaching sufferings; *now is my soul troubled*. Now the black and dismal scene began, now were the first throws of the travel of his soul, now his agony began, his soul *began to be exceeding sorrowful*. Note, 1. *The sin of our soul* was the trouble of Christ's soul, when he undertook to redeem and save us, and to make his soul an offering for our sin. 2. The trouble of his soul was designed to ease the trouble of our souls; for after this, he said to his disciples, *chap.* xiv. 1. *Let not your hearts be troubled*; what need yours be troubled and mine too? Our Lord Jesus went on cheerfully in his work, in prospect of the joy set before him, and yet submitted to a *trouble of soul*. Holy mourning is consistent with spiritual joy, and the way to eternal joy. Christ was *now* troubled, *now* in sorrow, *now* in fear, now for a season, but it would not be so *always*, it would not be so *long*. The same is the comfort of Christians in their troubles: They are but *for a moment*, and will be turned into joy.

2. The strait he seems to be in hereupon, intimated in those words, *And what shall I say?* This doth not speak him consulting with any other, as if he needed advice, but *considering* with himself what was fit to be said now. When our souls are troubled we must take heed of speaking unadvisedly, but debate with our selves what we shall say. Christ speaks like one at a *loss*, as if what he should chuse he wot not. There was a struggle between the *work* he had taken upon him, which required sufferings, and the *nature* he had taken upon him, which dreaded them; between these two he here pauseth, with *what shall I say?* He looked and there was *none to help*, which put him to a stand. Calvin observes this as a great instance of Christ's humiliation, that he should speak thus like one at a plunge. *Quo se magis exinanivit gloriae Dominus, eo luculentius habemus erga nos amoris specimen*. Thus he was in all points tempted like as we are, to encourage us, when we know not what to do, to have our eyes to him.

3. His prayer to God in this strait; *Father, save me from this hour*, *ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης*, out of this hour; praying not so much that it might not come, as that he might be brought through it. *Save me from this hour*; this was the language of innocent nature, and its resentments poured forth in prayer. Note, It is the duty and interest of *troubled souls* to have recourse to God by faithful and fervent prayer, and in prayer to eye him as a Father. Christ was voluntary



in his sufferings, and yet prayed to be saved from them. Note, Prayer against a trouble may very well consist with patience under it, and submission to the will of God in it. Observe, He calls his suffering *this hour*, meaning the expected events of the *time now at hand*; hereby he intimates, that the time of his suffering was, (1.) A *set time*, set to an hour, and he knew it. It was said twice before that his hour was not yet come, but it was now so near that he might say it was come. (2.) A *short time*; an hour is soon over, so were Christ's sufferings, he could see through them to the *joy set before him*.

4. His acquiescence in his Father's will notwithstanding. He presently corrects himself, and, as it were, recalls what he had said, *but for this cause came I to this hour*. Innocent nature got the *first word*, but divine wisdom and love got the last. Note, They who would proceed regularly must go upon *second thoughts*. The complainant *speaks first*; but if we would judge righteously we must *hear the other side*. The second thought he checked himself, which was, *for this cause came I to this hour*; he doth not silence himself with this, that he could not avoid it, there was no remedy; but *satisfies* himself with this, that he would not avoid, for it was pursuant to his own voluntary engagement, and was to be the crown of his whole undertaking; should he now fly off, it would frustrate all that had been done hitherto. Reference is here had to the divine counsels concerning his sufferings, by virtue of which, thus it behoveth him to submit and suffer. Note, This should reconcile us to the darkest hours of our lives, that we were all along designed for them, see 1 *Thes.* iii. 3.

5. His regard to his Father's honour herein. Upon the withdrawing of his former petition, he presents another, which he will abide by, *Father, glorify thy name*; to the same purpose with, *Father, thy will be done*, for God's will is for his own glory: This speaks more than barely a *submission* to the will of God, it is a *consecration of his sufferings* to the glory of God. It was a mediatorial word, and was spoken by him, as our surety who had undertaken to satisfy divine justice for our sin. The wrong which by sin we have done to God, is *in his glory*, his declarative glory; for in nothing else are we capable of doing him injury. We were never able to make him satisfaction for this wrong done him, nor any creature for us; nothing therefore remained, but that God should get him honour upon us in our utter ruin. Here therefore our Lord Jesus *interposed*, undertook to satisfy God's injured honour, and he did it by his *humiliation*; he denied himself in, and divested himself of, the honours due to the Son of God incarnate, and submitted to the greatest reproach. Now here he *makes a tender* of this satisfaction as an *equivalent*, *Father, glorify thy name*; let thy justice be honoured upon the *sacrifice*, not upon the *sinner*; let the debt be levied upon me, I am solvent, the principal is not; thus he *restored that which he took not away*.

Secondly, The Father's answer to this address, for he *heard him always*, and doth still. Observe,

1. How this answer was given, *by a voice from heaven*. The Jews speak much of a *Bath-kôl*, the daughter of a voice, as one of those *divers manners* by which God in time past spake to the prophets; but we do not find any instance of his speaking thus to any but to our Lord Jesus; it was an honour reserved for him, *Mat.* iii. 17. —xvii. 5. and here probably this audible voice was introduced by some visible appearance, either of *light* or *darkness*, for both have been used as vehicles of the divine glory.

2. What the answer was, it was an express return to that petition, *Father, glorify thy name, I have glorified it already, and I will glorify it yet again*. When we pray as we are taught, *Our Father, hallowed be thy name*, this is a comfort to us, that it is an *answered prayer*; answered to Christ here, and, in him, to all true believers. (1.) The name of God *had been glorified in the life of Christ*, in his doctrine and miracles, and all the examples he gave of holiness and goodness. (2.) It *should be further glorified in the death and sufferings of Christ*; his wisdom and power, his justice and holiness, his truth and goodness were greatly glorified; the demands of a broken law were fully answered, the affront done to God's government satisfied for, and God accepted the satisfaction, and declared himself well pleased. What God *has done* for the glorifying of his own name, is an encouragement to us to expect what he will yet further do. He that has secured the interests of his own glory, will still.

Thirdly, The opinion of the standers-by concerning this voice, *ver.* 29. We may hope there were some among them, whose minds were so well prepared to receive a divine revelation, that they understood what was said, and they bare record of it. But notice is here taken of the perverse suggestion of the multitude, some of them said *it thundered*, others who took notice that there was plainly an articulate, intelligible voice, said, for certain *an angel spake to him*. Now this shews, 1. That it was a *real thing*, even in the judgment of those that were not at all well affected to him. 2. That they were loth to admit so plain a proof of Christ's divine mission. They would rather say, it was this, or that, or any thing, than that God spake to him in answer to his prayer; and yet if it *thundered* with articulate sounds (as *Rev.* x. 3, 4.) was not that God's voice? or, if *angels* spake to him, are not they God's messengers? But thus God *speaks once, yea twice, and man perceives it not*.

Fourthly, The account which our Saviour himself gives of this voice.

1. Why it was sent; *ver.* 30. It came *not because of me*, not nearly for my encouragement and satisfaction, then it might have been whispered in his ear privately, but *for your sakes*. (1.) That

all you who heard it may *believe that the Father hath sent me*. What is said from heaven concerning our Lord Jesus, and the glorifying of the Father in him, is said *for our sakes*, that we might be brought to submit to him, and rest upon him. (2.) That you my disciples, who are to follow me in sufferings, may therein be comforted with the same comforts that carry me on. Let this encourage them to part with life itself for his sake if they were called to it, that it should redound to the honour of God. Note, The promises and supports granted to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings were intended *for our sakes*. *For our sakes* he *sanctified himself*, and *comforted himself*.

2. What was the meaning of it. He that lay in the Father's bosom knew his voice, and what was the meaning of it; and two things God intended when he said that he would *glorify his own name*.

1. That by the death of Christ Satan should be conquered. *Ver.* 31. *Now is the judgment*. He speaks with a divine exultation and triumph. Now the year of my redeemed is come, and the time prefixed for the breaking of the serpent's head, and giving a total rent to the powers of darkness; *now* for that glorious achievement; *now*, *now*, that great work is to be done which has been so long *thought of* in the divine counsels, so long talked of in the written word, which has been so much the hope of saints, and the dread of devils. The matter of the triumph is,

(1.) That *now is the judgment of the world*; *xpius* take it as a physical term, now is the *crisis* of this world. The sick and diseased world is now upon the turning point, this is the critical day upon which the trembling scale will turn for *life or death* to all mankind; all that are not recovered by this will be left helpless and hopeless. Or rather, it is a law term, as we take it; now judgment is entered in order to the taking out of execution against the prince of this world. Note, The death of Christ was the *judgment of this world*. (1.) It is a judgment of *discovery* and *distinction*; *judicium discretionis*, so Austin. Now is the trial of this world, for men shall have their character according as the cross of Christ is to them; to some it is *foolishness* and a *stumbling-block*, to others it is the *wisdom* and power of God; of which there was a figure in the two thieves that were *crucified with him*. By this men are judged what they think of the death of Christ. (2.) It is a judgment of *favour* and *absolution* to the chosen ones that are in the world. Christ upon the cross interposed between a righteous God and a guilty world as a sacrifice for sin, and a surety for sinners, so that when he was *judged*, and *iniquity laid upon him*, and he was wounded for our transgressions, it was as it were the *judgment of this world*, for an everlasting righteousness was thereby brought in, not for Jews only, but the whole world, 1 *John* ii. 1, 2. *Dan.* ix. 24. (3.) It is a judgment of condemnation given against the powers of darkness, see *John* xvi. 11. Judgment is put for vindication and deliverance, the asserting of an invaded right. At the death of Christ there was a famous trial between Christ and Satan, the serpent and the *promised seed*; the trial was for the world, and the lordship of it; the devil had long born sway among the children of men, *time out of mind*, now pleads prescription, grounding his claim also upon the *forfeiture* incurred by sin: We find him willing to have come to a composition, *Luke* iv. 6, 7. he would have given the kingdoms of this world to Christ, provided he would hold them *by, from, and under him*; but Christ would *try it out* with him; by dying he takes off the forfeiture to divine justice, and then fairly *disputes* the title, and *recovers* it in the court of heaven: Satan's dominion is declared to be an usurpation, and the world adjudged to the Lord Jesus as his right, *Psal.* ii. 6, 8. The judgment of this world is, that it belongs to Christ, and not to Satan; *to Christ* therefore let us all *attune tenants*.

2. That *now is the prince of this world cast out*.

1. It is the devil that is here called the *prince of this world*, because he rules over the men of the world by the things of the world; he is the *ruler of the darkness of this world*, i. e. of this *dark world*, of those in it that *walk in darkness*, 2 *Cor.* iv. 4. *Eph.* vi. 12.

2. He is said to be *cast out*, to be *now* cast out, for whatever had been done hitherto towards the weakening of the devil's kingdom, was done in the virtue of a Christ to come, and therefore is said to be done *now*. Christ *reconciling* the world to God by the merit of his death broke the *power of death*, and cast out Satan as a *destroyer*; Christ *reducing* the world to God by the doctrine of his cross broke the *power of sin*, and cast out Satan as a *deceiver*. The bruising of his heel, was the breaking of the serpent's head, *Gen.* iii. 15. When his oracles were silenced, his temples forsaken, his idols famished, and the kingdoms of the world become Christ's kingdoms, then was the *prince of the world cast out*, as appears by comparing this with John's vision, *Rev.* xii. 8, 9, 10, 11. where it is said to be done by the *blood of the Lamb*. Christ's frequent casting of devils out of the bodies of people, was an indication of the great design of his whole undertaking. Observe, With what assurance Christ here speaks of the victory over Satan; it is as good as done, and even when he yields to death he triumphs over it.

2. That by the death of Christ *souls shall be converted*, and that would be the casting out of Satan. *Ver.* 32. *If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me*. Where observe two things.

1. The great design of our Lord Jesus, which was to *draw all men to him*, not the Jews only, who had been long in profession a people *near to God*, but the Gentiles also, who had been *afar off*; for he was to be the *desire of all nations*, *Hag.* ii. 7. and to him must the



the gathering of the people be. That which his enemies dreaded, was, that the world would go after him, and he would draw them to him notwithstanding their opposition. Observe here how Christ himself is all in all in the conversion of a soul. (1.) It is Christ that draws; I will draw. It is sometimes ascribed to the Father, *John vi. 44.* but here to the Son who is the arm of the Lord. He doth not drive by force, but draw with the cords of a man, *Hos. xi. 4.* *Jer. xxxi. 3.* draws as the loadstone, the soul is made willing, but it is in a day of power. (2.) It is in Christ that we are drawn, I will draw them to me as the centre of their unity. The soul that was at a distance from Christ is brought into an acquaintance with him, that was shy and distrustful of him, is brought to love him and trust him; drawn up to his terms, into his arms. Christ was now going to heaven, and he would draw mens hearts to him thither.

2. The strange method he took to accomplish his design, by being lifted up from the earth. What he meant by that, to prevent mistake, we are told, *ver. 33.* This he spake signifying by what death he should die, viz. the death of the cross, though they had designed, and attempted to stone him to death. He that was crucified, was first nailed to the cross, and then lifted up upon it. He was lifted up as a spectacle to the world; lifted up between heaven and earth as unworthy of either; yet the word here used signified an honourable advancement, *ἐν ὑψώθῃ*, if I be exalted; he reckoned his sufferings his honour. Whatever death we die, if we die in Christ, we shall be lifted up out of this dungeon, this den of lions, into the regions of light and love. We should learn of our Master to speak of dying with a holy pleasantness, and to say, we shall then be lifted up.

Now Christ's drawing all men to him, followed his being lifted up from the earth. 1. It followed after it in time. The great increase of the church was after the death of Christ; while Christ lived we read of thousands at a sermon miraculously fed, but it was after his death that we read of thousands at a sermon added to the church which should be saved. Israel began to multiply in Egypt after the death of Joseph. 2. It followed upon it as a blessed consequence of it. Note, There is a powerful virtue and efficacy in the death of Christ to draw souls to him. The cross of Christ, though to some it is a stumbling-stone, to others it is a load-stone. Some make it an allusion to the drawing of fish into a net; the lifting up of Christ was as the spreading of the net, *Matt. xiii. 47, 48.* Or to the setting up of a standard, which draws soldiers together; or rather, it refers to the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, which drew all those to it that were stung with fiery serpents; as soon as ever it was known that it was lifted up, and there was healing virtue in it, O! what flocking was there to it; so there was to Christ when salvation through him was preached to all nations; see *John iii. 14, 15.* Perhaps it has some reference to the posture in which Christ was crucified, with his arms stretched out, to invite all to him, and embrace all that come. They that put Christ to that ignominious death, thought thereby to drive all men from him; but the devil was out-shot in his own bow: Out of the eater came forth meat.

Fifthly, The people's exception against what he said, and their cavil at it, *ver. 34.* Though they had heard the voice from heaven, and the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, yet they object, and pick quarrels with him. Christ had called himself the Son of man, *ver. 23.* which they knew to be one of the titles of the Messiah, *Dan. vii. 13.* He had also said, that the Son of man must be lifted up, which they understood of his dying, and probably he explained himself so; and some think repeated what he said to Nicodemus, *John iii. 14.* So must the Son of man be lifted up. Now against this,

1. They alledge those scriptures of the Old Testament which speak of the perpetuity of the Messiah, that he should be so far from being cut off in the midst of his days, that he should be a priest for ever, *Psal. cx. 4.* and a king for ever, *Psal. lxxxix. 29, &c.* that he should have length of days for ever and ever, and his years as many generations, *Psal. xx. 4.—lxi. 6.* from all this they inferred that the Messiah should not die: Thus great knowledge in the letter of the scripture, if the heart be un sanctified, is capable of being abused to serve the cause of infidelity; and to fight against Christianity with its own weapons. Their perverseness in opposing this to what Jesus had said, will appear if we consider, (1.) That when they vouched the scripture to prove that the Messiah abideth for ever, they took no notice of those texts which speak of the Messiah's death and sufferings; they had heard out of the law that Messiah abideth for ever, and had they never heard out of the law that Messiah shall be cut off? *Dan. ix. 26.* and that he shall pour out his soul unto death, *Isa. liii. 12.* and particularly that his hands and feet should be pierced; why then do they make so strange of the lifting up of the Son of man? Note, We often run into great mistakes, and then defend them with scripture arguments, by putting those things asunder which God in his word has put together; and opposing one truth under pretence of supporting another. We have heard out of the gospel that which exalts free grace; we have heard also that which enjoins duty, and we must cordially embrace both, and not separate them, or set them at variance. (2.) That when they opposed what Christ said concerning the sufferings of the Son of man, they took no notice of what he had said concerning his glory and exaltation. They had heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever, and had they not heard our Lord Jesus say that he should be glorified; that he should bring forth much fruit, and draw all men to him; had he not just now promised immortal honours to his followers, which supposed his abiding for ever,

but this they overlook. Thus unfair disputants oppose some parts of the opinion of an adversary, which if they would but take intire they could not but subscribe to; and in the doctrine of Christ there are paradoxes, which to men of corrupt minds are stones of stumbling; as Christ crucified, and yet glorified; lifted up from the earth, and yet drawing all men to him.

2. They ask hereupon, Who is this Son of man? This they asked, but with a desire to be instructed, but tauntingly, and insultingly, as if now they had baffled him, and run him down. Thou sayest, The Son of man must die; we have proved the Messiah must not; and where is then thy Messiahship? This Son of man, as thou callest thy self, cannot be the Messiah, thou must therefore think of something else to pretend to. Now that which prejudiced them against Christ, was his meanness and poverty; they would rather have no Christ than a suffering one.

Sixthly, What Christ said to this exception, or rather what he said upon it. The objection was a perfect cavil, they might if they pleased answer it themselves. Man dieth, and yet is immortal, and abideth for ever, so the Son of man; therefore instead of answering these fools according to their folly, he gives them a serious caution to take heed of trifling away the day of their opportunities in such vain and fruitless cavils as these. *Ver. 35, 36.* Yet a little while, and but a little while, is the light with you, therefore be wise for your selves, and walk while ye have the light.

In general we may observe here, (1.) The concern Christ has for the souls of men, and his desire of their welfare. With what tenderness doth he here admonish those to look well to themselves, who were contriving ill against him? Even when he endured the contradiction of sinners, he endeavoured their conversion. See *Prov. xxix. 10.* (2.) The method he takes with those objectors; with meekness instructing those that opposed themselves, 2 Tim. ii. 25. Were but mens consciences awakened with a due concern about their everlasting state, and did they consider how little time they have to spend, and none to spare, they would not waste precious thoughts and time in trifling cavils.

Particularly we have here,

1. The privilege and advantage they enjoyed in having Christ and his gospel among them with the shortness and uncertainty of their enjoyment of it. Yet a little while is the light with you. Christ is this light; and some of the antients suggest, that in calling himself the light, he gives a tacit answer to their objection. His dying upon the cross was as consistent with his abiding for ever, as the setting of the sun every night is with his perpetuity: The duration of Christ's kingdom is compared to that of the sun and moon, *Psal. lxxii. 17.—lxxxix. 36, 37.* The ordinances of heaven are unchangeably fixed, and yet the sun and moon set and are eclipsed; so Christ the Son of righteousness, abides for ever, and yet was eclipsed by his sufferings, and was but a little while within our horizon. Now, (1.) The Jews at this time had the light with them, they had Christ's bodily presence heard his preaching, saw his miracles. The scripture is to us a light shining in a dark place. (2.) It was to be but a little while with them; Christ would shortly leave them, their visible church state would soon after be dissolved, and the kingdom of God taken from them, and blindness and hardness would happen unto Israel. Note, It is good for us all to consider what a little while we are to have the light with us. Time is short, and perhaps opportunity not so long. The candlestick may be removed, however, we must be removed shortly. Yet a little while is the light of life with us; yet a little while is the light of the gospel with us, the day of grace, the means of grace, the Spirit of grace, yet a very little while.

2. The warning given them to make the best of these advantages while they enjoyed them, because of the danger they were in of losing them. Walk while ye have the light, as travellers who make the best of their way forward, that they may not be benighted in their journey, because travelling in the night is uncomfortable and unsafe. Come, say they, let us mend our pace, and get forward while we have day-light. Thus wise should we be for our souls, who are journeying towards eternity. Note, (1.) It is our business to walk, to press forwards towards heaven, and to get nearer it by being made fitter for it. Our life is but a day, and we have a day's journey to go. (2.) The best time of walking is while we have the light. The day is the proper season for work, as the night is for rest. The proper time for getting grace is when we have the word of grace preached to us, and the Spirit of grace striving with us, and therefore then is the time to be busy. (3.) We are highly concerned thus to improve our opportunities, for fear lest our day be finished before we have finished our day's work, and day's journey. Lest darkness come upon you, lest you lose your opportunities, and can neither recover them, nor dispatch the business you have to do without them. Then darkness comes, i. e. such an utter incapacity to make sure the great salvation, as renders the state of the careless sinner quite deplorable; so that if his work be undone, then, it is like to be undone for ever.

3. The sad condition of those who have sinned away the gospel, and are come to the period of their day of grace. They walk in darkness, and know neither where they go, nor whither they go; neither the way they are walking in, nor the end they are walking towards. He that is destitute of the light of the gospel, and is not acquainted with its discoveries and directions, he wanders endlessly in mistakes and errors, and a thousand crooked paths, and is not aware of it. Set aside the instructions of the Christian doctrine, and we know little of the difference between good and evil. He is going to destruction, and knows



knows not his danger, for he is either *sleeping* or *dancing* at the pit's brink.

4. The great duty and interest of every one of us inferred from all this, *ver. 36. While ye have light, believe in the light.* The Jews had now Christ's presence with them, let them improve it; afterwards they had the *first offers* of the gospel made to them by the apostles where-ever they came; now this is an admonition to them not to out-stand their market, but to accept the offer when it was made them: The same Christ faith to us all who enjoy the gospel. Note, 1. It is the duty of every one of us to *believe in the gospel light*, to receive it as a divine light, to subscribe to the truths it discovers, for it is a light to *our eyes*; and to follow its conduct, for it is a light to *our feet*. Christ is the light, and we must *believe in him* as he is revealed to us; as a *true* light that will not deceive us; a *sure* light that will not misguide us. 2. We are concerned to do this while we have the light, to lay hold on Christ *while we have* the gospel to shew us the way to him, and direct us in that way. 3. They that believe in the light *shall be the children of light*, they shall be owned as *Christians*, who are called *children of light*, Luke xvi. 8. Eph. v. 8. and of the day, 1 *Thes.* v. 5. They that have God for their Father, are children of light, for God is light; that are born from above, and heirs of heaven, and children of light, for heaven is light.

Seventhly, Christ's retiring from them hereupon; *These things spake Jesus*, and said no more at this time, but left this to their consideration, and departed, and did hide himself from them. And this he did, (1.) For their conviction and awakening. If they will not regard what he hath said, he will have nothing more to say to them. They are joined to their infidelity, as Ephraim to idols; *let them alone*. Note, Christ justly removes the means of grace from those that quarrel with them, and *hides his face from a froward generation*, Deut. xxxii. 21. (2.) For his own preservation. He hid himself, from their rage and fury, retreating, it is probable, to Bethany, where he lodged. By this it appears that what he said irritated and exasperated them, and they were made worse by that which should have made them better.

37. ¶ But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38. That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39. Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40. He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their eyes*, nor understand with *their heart*, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

We have here the honour done to our Lord Jesus by the Old Testament prophets, who foretold, and lamented, the infidelity of the many that believed not on him. It was indeed a dishonour and grief to Christ, that his doctrine met with so little acceptance, and so much opposition; but this takes off the wonder and reproach, makes the offence of it to cease, and made it no disappointment to Christ, that herein the scriptures were fulfilled. Two things are here said concerning this untractable people, and both were foretold by the evangelical prophet Isaiah, that they *did not believe*, and that they *could not believe*.

First, They *did not believe*, *ver. 37. Though he had done so many miracles before them*, which, one would think, should have convinced them, yet they believed not, but opposed him. Observe,

1. The *plenty* of the means of conviction which Christ afforded them; he *did miracles*, so many miracles, *τοσαῦτα σημεῖα*, it signifies both so many, and so great. It refers to all the miracles he had wrought formerly, nay, the *blind* and *lame* now came to him into the temple; and he healed them, *Matt.* xxi. 14. His miracles were the great proof of his mission, and on the evidence of them he relied. Two things concerning them he here insists upon; (1.) The *number* of them, they were *many*; *various*, and of divers kinds; *numerous*, and oft repeated, and every new miracle confirmed the reality of all that went before. The multitude of his miracles was not only a proof of his unexhausted power, but gave the greater opportunity to examine them; and if there had been a cheat in them, it was morally impossible, but that in some or other of them it would have been discovered; and being all *miracles of mercy*, the more there were, the more good was done. (2.) The *notoriety* of them. He wrought these miracles *before them*, not at a distance, not in a corner, but before many witnesses, appearing to their own eyes.

2. The *inefficacy* of these means, yet they believed not on him. They could not gainsay the premises, and yet would not grant the conclusion. Note, The most plentiful and powerful means of conviction will not of themselves work faith in the depraved prejudiced hearts of men: These *saw* and yet *believed not*.

3. The fulfilling of the scripture in this. *Ver. 38. That the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled.* Not that these infidel Jews designed the fulfilling of the scripture, they rather fancied those scriptures which speak of the church's best sons to be fulfilled in themselves, but the event exactly answered the prediction, so that (ut for ita ut) this saying of Esaias was fulfilled. The more improbable any event is, the more doth a divine foresight appear in the prediction of it.

One could not have imagined that the kingdom of the Messiah, supported with such pregnant proofs, should have met with so much opposition among the Jews, and therefore their unbelief is called a *marvellous work, and a wonder*, Isa. xxix. 9, 14. Christ himself *marvelled at it*, but it was what Isaiah foretold, *Isa.* liii. 1. and now it is accomplished. Observe, (1.) The gospel is here called *their report*. *Who has believed*, *τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν*, our *hearing*, which we have heard *from God*, and which you have heard *from us*; our report is the report that we bring, like the *report* of a matter of fact; or the *report* of a solemn resolution in the senate. (2.) It is foretold that few comparatively of those to whom this report is brought, will be persuaded to give credit to it: Many hear it, but few heed it, and embrace it. *Who hath believed it?* Here and there one, but none to speak of; not the wise, not the noble; it is to them but a *report* which wants confirmation. (3.) It is spoken of as a thing to be greatly lamented, that so few believe the report of the gospel. *Lord* is here prefixed from the LXX, but is not in the Hebrew, and it intimates a sorrowful account brought to God by the messengers, of the cold entertainment which they and their report had; as *the servant came and shewed his Lord all these things*, Luke xiv. 21. (4.) The reason why men believe not the report of the gospel, is because *the arm of the Lord* is not *revealed* to them, *i. e.* because they do not acquaint themselves with, and submit themselves to the grace of God; they do not experimentally know the virtue and fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection, in which the arm of the Lord is *revealed*. They saw Christ's miracles, but did not see the *arm of the Lord* revealed in them.

Secondly, They *could not believe*, and therefore they could not, because *Esaias said, he hath blinded their eyes*. This is a hard saying, who can explain it? We are sure God is infinitely just and merciful, and therefore cannot think there is in any such an impotency to good, resulting from the counsels of God, as lays them under a fatal necessity of being evil; God damns none by meer sovereignty, yet it is said, they could not believe. St. Austin coming in course to the exposition of these words, expresseth himself with a holy fear of entring upon an enquiry into this mystery: *Iusta sunt judicia ejus, sed occulta.* (1.) They *could not believe*, that is, they *would not*; they were obstinately resolved in their infidelity; thus Chrysostom and Austin incline to understand it; and the former gives divers instances of scripture of the putting of an impotency to signify the invincible refusal of the will, as *Gen.* xxxvii. 4. *They could not speak peaceably to him.* And *John* vii. 7. This is a *moral* impotency, like that of one that is accustomed to do evil, *Jer.* x. 23. But, (2.) They could not because Esaias had said, *He hath blinded their eyes*. Here the difficulty increaseth; it is certain God is not the author of sin, and yet,

1. There is a righteous hand of God sometimes to be acknowledged in the blindness and obstinacy of those who persist in impenitency and unbelief, by which they are justly punished for their former resistance of the divine light, and rebellion against the divine law. If God withhold *abused* grace, and give men over to *indulged* lusts; if he permit the *evil spirit* to do his work on them that resisted the *good Spirit*; and if in his providence he lay *stumbling-blocks* in sinners way, which confirm their prejudices, then he *blinds their eyes*, and *hardens their hearts*, and these are *spiritual judgments*, like the giving up of idolatrous Gentiles to *vile affections*, and degenerate Christians to *strong delusions*.

Observe the method of conversion implied here, and the steps taken in it. (1.) Sinners are brought to *see with their eyes*, to discern the reality of divine things, and to have some knowledge of them. (2.) *To understand with their heart*, to apply these things to themselves; not only to assent and approve, but to consent and accept. (3.) To be *converted*, and effectually turned from sin to Christ, from the world and the flesh to God, as their felicity and portion. (4.) Then God will *heal* them, will justify and sanctify them; will *pardon* their sins, which are as *bleeding wounds*, and mortify their corruptions, which are as *lurking diseases*; now when God denies his grace, nothing of this is done; the alienation of the mind from, and its aversion to, God, and the divine life, grows into a rooted and invincible antipathy, and so the case becomes desperate.

2. This judicial blindness and hardness is in the word of God threatened against those who wilfully persist in wickedness, and was particularly foretold concerning the Jewish church and nation. Known unto God are all *his* works, and all *ours* too; Christ knew before who would betray him, and spoke of it, *John* vi. 70. This is a confirmation of the truth of scripture prophecies, and thus even the unbelief of the Jews may help to *strengthen our faith*. It is also intended for caution to particular persons, to *beware lest that come upon them, which was spoken of in the prophets*, Acts xiii. 40.

3. What God has foretold, will certainly come to pass, and so by a necessary consequence, in order of arguing, it might be said, that therefore they *could not believe*, because God by the prophets had foretold they would not, for such is the knowledge of God, that he cannot be *deceived* in what he *foresees*; and such his truth, that he cannot *deceive* in what he *foretells*, so that the scripture cannot be broken. Yet be it observed, that the prophecy did not name particular persons; so that it might not be said therefore, such a one, and such a one, could not believe, because Esaias had said so and so; but it pointed at the body of the Jewish nation, which would persist in their infidelity, till their cities were wasted without inhabitants, as it follows, *Isa.* vi. 11, 12. yet still reserving a remnant, *ver. 13. in it shall be a tenth.* Which reserve was sufficient to keep a door of hope open.



to particular persons, for each one might say, why may not I be of that remnant?

Lastly, The evangelist having quoted the prophecy, shews, *ver. 41.* that it was intended to look further than the prophet's own days, and that its principal reference was to the days of the Messiah; *These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.*

1. We read in the prophecy, that this was said to Esaias, *Isa. vi. 8.* But here we are told it was said *by him* to the purpose. For nothing was said *by him* as a prophet, which was not first said *to him*; nor any thing said *to him*, which was not afterwards said *by him*, to those to whom he was sent. See *Isa. xxi. 10.*

2. The vision which the prophet there had of the *glory of God*, is here said to be his *seeing the glory* of Jesus Christ, he *saw his glory*. Jesus Christ therefore is equal in power and glory with the Father, and his praises equally celebrated. Christ had a glory before the foundation of the world, and Esaias saw this.

3. It is said that the prophet there *spake of him*. It seems to have been spoken of the prophet himself, for to him the commission and instructions were there given, and yet it is here said to be *spoken of Christ*, for as all the prophets testified of him, so they all typified him. This they spake of him, that as to many his coming would be not only *fruitless* but *fatal*, a favour of death unto death. It might be objected against his doctrine, if it was *from heaven*, why did not the Jews believe it? but this is an answer to it; it was not for want of evidence, but because their *heart was made fat*, and their *ears heavy*. It was spoken of Christ, that he should be glorified in the ruin of an unbelieving multitude, as well as in the salvation of a distinguished remnant.

42. ¶ Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. 43. For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Some honour was done to Christ by these rulers, for they *believed on him*, were convinced that he was sent of God, and received his doctrine as divine; but they did not do him *honour enough*, for they had not courage to own their faith in him. Many professed more kindness for Christ than really they had, these had more kindness for him, than they were willing to profess.

See here what a struggle was in these rulers between their *convictions* and their *corruptions*.

1. See the *power of the word* in the *convictions* that many of them were under, who did not wilfully shut their eyes against the light. They *believed on him* as Nicodemus, received him as a teacher come from God. Note, The truth of the gospel hath perhaps a better interest in the consciences of men than we are aware of. Many cannot but approve of that in their hearts, which yet outwardly they are shy of. Perhaps these chief rulers, were *true* believers, though very weak, and their faith like smoking flax. Note, It may be there are more good people than we think there are. Elijah thought he was left alone, when God had seven thousand faithful worshippers in Israel. Some are really better than they seem to be. Their faults are known, but their repentance is not; a man's goodness may be concealed by a *culpable*, yet pardonable, weakness, which he himself *truly* repents of. The *kingdom of God comes not in all with a like observation*; nor have all they that are good the faculty of shewing it as some have.

2. See the *power of the world* in the smothering of these convictions. They believed in Christ, but because of the Pharisees, who had it in their power to do them a diskindness, they durst not confess him for fear of being excommunicated. Observe here,

1. Wherein they *failed*, and were *defective*; they did not *confess* Christ. Note, There is cause to question the sincerity of that faith which is either afraid or ashamed to shew itself; for those who believe with the heart, ought to *confess with the mouth*, *Rom. x. 8.*

2. What they *feared*; being *put out of the synagogue*, which they thought would be a *disgrace* and *damage* to them; as if it would do them any harm to be expelled a synagogue, that had made itself a synagogue of Satan, and from which God was departing.

3. What was at the bottom of this fear; they loved the *praise of men*, chose it as a more valuable good, and pursued it as a more *desirable end* than the *praise of God*; which was an implicit idolatry, like that, *Rom. i. 25.* of *worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator*. They set these two in the scale one against the other, and having weighed them, they proceeded accordingly; (1.) They set the *praise of men* in one scale, and considered how good it was to *give praise to men*, and to pay a deference to the opinion of the Pharisees, and to *receive praise from men*, to be commended by the chief priests, and applauded by the people as *good sons of the church*, the Jewish church. And they would not confess Christ, lest they should thereby *derogate* from the reputation of the Pharisees, and *forfeit* their own, and balk their own preferment. And besides the followers of Christ were put into an *ill name*, and were looked upon with contempt, which they, who had been used to honour, could not bear. Yet perhaps if they had known *one another's* minds, they would have had *more courage*; but each one thought, if he should declare himself in favour of Christ, he should *stand alone*, and have no body to back him; whereas if any one had had resolution to *break the ice*, he would have had more *seconds* than he

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thought of. (2.) They put the *praise of God* in the other scale; they were sensible, that by *confessing Christ*, they should both *give praise to God*, and *have praise from God*, that he would be pleased with them, and say, Well done; but, (3.) They gave the preference to the praise of men, and that turned the scale; sense prevailed above faith, and represented it more desirable to stand right in the opinion of the Pharisees, than to be accepted of God. Note, Love of the praise of men is a very great prejudice of the power and practice of religion and godliness. Many come short of the glory of God, by having a regard to the applause of men, and a value for that. *Love of the praise of men*, as a *by-end* in that which is *good*, will make a man an *hypocrite* when religion is in fashion, and credit is to be *got by it*; and as a *base principle* in that which is *evil*, it will make a man an *apostate*, when religion is in disgrace, and credit is to be *lost for it*, as here. See *Rom. ii. 29.*

44. ¶ Jesus cried, and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. 45. And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. 46. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness. 47. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. 49. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. 50. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

We have here the honour Christ not *assumed* but *asserted* to himself, in the account he gave of his mission and his errand into the world. Probably this discourse was not at the same time with that before, for then *he departed*, *ver. 36.* but some time after, when he made another publick appearance; and as this evangelist records it, it was Christ's *farewel sermon* to the Jews, and his last publick discourse; all that follows was *private* with his disciples. Now observe how our Lord Jesus delivered this parting word; he *cried and said*, *Doth not wisdom cry?* *Prov. viii. 1.* *cry without*, *Prov. i. 20.* The raising of his voice, and crying, intimates, (1.) His *boldness* in speaking; though they had not courage openly to profess faith in his doctrine, he had courage openly to publish it; if they were ashamed of it, he was not, but set his face as a flint, *Isa. l. 7.* (2.) His *earnestness* in speaking; he cried as one that was serious and importunate, and in good earnest in what he said, and was willing to impart to them not only the gospel of God, but *even his own soul*. (3.) It notes his desire, that all might take notice of it. This being the last time of the publication of his gospel by himself in his person, he makes proclamation, whoever will hear me, let them come now.

Now what is this conclusion of the whole matter? This closing summary of all Christ's discourses? It is much like that of Moses, *Deut. xxx. 15.* *See I have set before you life and death.* So Christ here takes leave of the temple, with a solemn declaration of three things.

First, The *privileges* and *dignities* which they have that *believe*; this gives great encouragement to us to believe in Christ, and to profess that faith: It is a thing of that nature, that we need not be either shy of doing it, or shy of owning it; for,

1. By believing in Christ, we are brought into an *honourable acquaintance with God*, *ver. 44, 45.* *He that believeth on me*, and so *seeth me*, *believes on him that sent me*, and so *sees him*. He that believes on Christ, (1.) He doth not believe in a *meer man*, such a one as he seemed to be, and was generally taken to be, but he believeth in one that is the *Son of God*, and equal in power and glory with the Father. Or rather, (2.) His faith doth not *terminate* in Christ, but through him it is *carried out* to the Father that sent him; to whom as our end, we come by Christ as our way. The doctrine of Christ is believed and received as the truth of God: The rest of a believing soul is in God through Christ as Mediator; for its resignation to Christ is in order to its being presented to God. Christianity is made up not of philosophy or politicks, but pure divinity.

This is illustrated, *ver. 45.* He that *sees me*, *sees him that sent me*; which is the same with *believing* in him, for faith is the eye of the soul; in getting acquaintance with Christ, we come to the knowledge of God. For, (1.) God makes himself known in the face of Christ, *2 Cor. iv. 6.* who is the express image of his person, *Heb. i. 3.* (2.) All that have a believing sight of Christ, are led by him to the knowledge of God, whom Christ has revealed to us by his word and Spirit. Christ, as God, was the image of his Father's person; but Christ, as *Mediator*, was his Father's *representative* in his relation to man; the divine light, law, and love, being communicated to us in and through him; so that in seeing him, we may read; in eying him as our Saviour, Prince, and Lord in the right of redemption, we see, and eye the Father as our owner, ruler, benefactor, in the right of creation, for God is pleased to deal with fallen man by proxy.



2. We are hereby brought into a comfortable enjoyment of our selves, ver. 46. *I am come a light into the world, that whatsoever believes in me, Jew or Gentile, should not abide in darkness.* Observe,

1. The character of Christ, *I am come a light into the world,* to be a light to it. It implies that he had a being, and a being as light before he came into the world, as the sun is before it rises; the prophets and apostles were made lights to the world, but it was Christ only that came a light into this world, having before been a glorious light in the upper world, *John iii. 19.*

2. The comfort of Christians, *they do not abide in darkness.* (1.) They do not continue in that dark condition in which they were by nature, they are *light in the Lord.* They were without any true comfort or joy, or hope, but do not continue in that condition; light is sown for them. (2.) What darkness of affliction, disquietment, or fear, they may afterwards be in, provision is made that they may not abide long in that darkness. (3.) They are delivered from that darkness which is perpetual, and which *abideth for ever*, that utter darkness, where is not the least gleam of light or hope of it.

Secondly, The *peril* and *danger* they are in that *believe not*, which gives fair warning to take heed of persisting in unbelief, ver. 47, 48. *If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not*, not I only, or not now, lest I should be looked upon as unfair in being judge in my own cause; yet let not infidelity think therefore to go unpunished, *though I judge him not, there is one that judgeth him.*

So that we have here the doom of unbelief. Observe,

1. Who they are whose unbelief is here condemned. Theirs who *hear Christ's words*, and yet *believe them not*, those shall not be condemned for their infidelity, that never had or could have the gospel; every man shall be judged according to the dispensation of light he was under; *they that have sinned without law, shall be judged without law.* But those that have heard, or might have heard, and would not, lie open to this doom.

2. What is the *constructive* malignity of their unbelief; not receiving Christ's word, it is interpreted, ver. 48. a *rejecting* of Christ, *ἡ ἀθετοῦν ἐμὲ.* It notes a rejection with scorn and contempt. Where the banner of the gospel is displayed, no neutrality is admitted; every man is either a subject or an enemy.

3. The wonderful patience and forbearance of our Lord Jesus exercised towards those who slighted him when he was come here upon earth. *I judge him not*, not now. Note, Christ was not quick or hasty, to take advantage against those who refused the first offers of his grace, but continued waiting to be gracious. He did not strike those *dumb* or *dead* who contradicted him, never made intercession against Israel as Elias did; though he had authority to judge, he suspended the execution of it, because he had work of another nature to do first, and that was to *save the world.* (1.) To save effectually those that were given him, before he came to judge the degenerate body of mankind. (2.) To offer salvation to all the world, and thus for to save them, that it is their own fault if they be not saved. He was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Now the executing of the power of a judge was not congruous with that undertaking, *Acts viii. 33.* *In his humiliation his judgment was taken away*, it was suspended for a time.

4. The certain and unavoidable judgment of unbelievers at the great day, the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God; unbelief will certainly be a damning sin. Some think when Christ saith, *I judge no man*, he means they are *condemned already*; there needs no process, they are *self-judged*, no execution, they are *self-ruined*; judgment goes against them of course, *Heb. ii. 3.* Christ needs not appear *against* them as their accuser, they are miserable if he do not appear *for* them as their advocate; however he tells them plainly, when and where they will be reckoned with.

1. There is *one that judgeth them.* Nothing more dreadful than abused patience, and grace trampled on; though for a while *mercy rejoiceth against judgment*, yet there will be *judgment without mercy.*

2. Their final judgment is preserved to the *last day*; to that day of judgment Christ here binds over all unbelievers, to answer then for all the contempts they have put upon him. Divine justice has appointed a day, and adjourns the sentence to that day, as *Matt. xxvi. 64.*

3. The word of Christ will judge them then. *The words that I have spoken*, how light soever you have made of them, *the same shall judge the unbeliever in the last day*; as the apostles, the preachers of Christ's word, are said to judge, *Luke xxii. 30.* Christ's word will judge unbelievers two ways. (1.) As the *evidence* of their crime, they will *convict* them. Every word Christ spoke, every sermon, every argument, every kind offer will be produced as a testimony against those who slighted all he said. (2.) As the *rule* of their doom, they will *condemn* them; they shall be judged according to the tenor of that covenant which Christ procured and published. That word of Christ, *He that believes not shall be damned*, will judge all unbelievers to eternal ruin; and there are many such like words.

Thirdly, A solemn declaration of the authority Christ had to demand our faith, and require us to receive his doctrine upon pain of damnation, ver. 49, 50. Where observe,

1. The commission which our Lord Jesus received from the Father, to deliver his doctrine to the world, ver. 49. *I have not spoken of myself*, as a mere man, much less as a common man; but the Father gave me a commandment what I should say. This is the same with what he had said, *John vii. 17.* *My doctrine is*, (1.) *Not mine*,

for *I have not spoken of myself.* Christ, as *Son of man*, did not speak that which was of human contrivance or composition; as *Son of God*, he did not *act separately*, or by himself alone, but what he said was the result of the counsels of peace; as Mediator, his coming into the world was voluntary, and *with his full consent*, but not *arbitrary*, and of *his own head.* But, (2.) It was he that *sent him.* God the Father gave him, (1.) His *commission*; God sent him as his agent and plenipotentiary to concert matters between him and man, to set a treaty of peace on foot, and to settle the articles. (2.) His *instructions*, here called a *commandment*, for they were like those given an ambassador, directing him not only what he *may* say, but what he *must* say. The messenger of the covenant was intrusted with an errand which he must deliver. Note, Our Lord Jesus learned obedience himself, before he taught it us, though he were a son. *The Lord God commanded the first Adam*, and he by his *disobedience* ruined us; he *commanded the second Adam*, and he by his obedience saved us.

God commanded him *what he should say*, and *what he should speak*, two words signifying the same thing, to note that every word was divine. The Old Testament prophets sometimes spoke of themselves, but Christ spoke by the Spirit at all times. Some make this distinction; he was directed *what he should say* in his set-sermons, and what he should *speak* in his familiar discourses. Others this; he was directed what he should *say* in his preaching now, and what he should *speak* in his judging at the last day, for he had commission and instructions for both.

2. The scope, design, and tendency of that commission, ver. 50. *I know that his commandment is life everlasting.* The commission given to Christ had a reference to the everlasting state of the children of men, and was in order to their everlasting life and happiness in that state, the instructions given to Christ as a prophet, were to *reveal eternal life*, 1 John v. 10. The power given to Christ as a king, was to *give eternal life*, John xvii. 2. Thus the command given him was *life everlasting.* This Christ saith, he *knew*; I *know* it is so, which intimates how cheerfully, and with what assurance Christ pursued his undertaking, knowing very well that he went upon a good errand; and that which would bring forth fruit unto *life eternal.* It intimates likewise how justly they will perish who reject Christ and his word; those who disobey Christ, despise *everlasting life*, and renounce it; so that not only *Christ's words* will judge them, but even *their own*; so shall *their doom be*, themselves have decided it; and who can except against it?

3. Christ's exact observance of the commission and instructions given him, and his steady acting in pursuance of them. *Whatsoever I speak*, it is as the Father said unto me. Christ was intimately acquainted with the counsels of God, and was faithful in discovering so much of them to the children of men, as it was agreed should be discovered, and *kept back nothing that was profitable.* As the faithful witness delivereth souls, so did he, and spoke the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Now, (1.) This is a great encouragement to faith, the sayings of Christ rightly understood, are what we may venture our souls upon. (2.) It is a great example of obedience. Christ said he was bidden, and so must we; communicated what the Father had said to him, and so must we. See *Acts iv. 20.* In the midst of all the respects paid him, this is the honour he values himself upon, that what the Father had said to him, that he spoke, and in the manner as he was directed, so he spoke. This was his glory, that as a son, he was faithful to him that appointed him; and by an unfeigned belief of every word of Christ, and an entire subjection of soul to it; we must *give him the glory due to his name.*

### C H A P. XIII.

Our Saviour having finished his publick discourses, in which he endured the contradiction of sinners; he now applies himself to a private conversation with his friends, in which he designed the consolation of saints. Hence forward we have an account of what passed between him and his disciples, who were to be intrusted with the affairs of his household, when he was gone into a far country, the necessary instructions and comforts he furnished them with; his hour being at hand, he applies himself to set his house in order. In this chapter, (1.) He washeth his disciples feet, ver. 1—17. (2.) He foretels who should betray him, ver. 18—30. (3.) He instructs them in the great doctrine of his own death, and the great duty of brotherly love, ver. 31—35. (4.) He foretels Peter's denying of him, ver. 36—38.

1. **N**OW before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2. And supper being ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simons son, to betray him) 3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, 4. He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. 5. After that, he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples feet, and



to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7. Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13. Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14. If I then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one anothers feet. 15. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16. Verily, verily I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. 17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

It has generally been taken for granted, that Christ's washing his disciples feet, and the discourse that followed it, was the same night in which he was betrayed, and at the same sitting, wherein he eat the passover, and instituted the Lord's-supper. But whether before the solemnity began, or after it was all over, or between the eating of the passover, and the institution of the Lord's-supper, they are not agreed. This evangelist making it his business to gather up those passages which the others had omitted, industriously omits those which the others had recorded; which occasions some difficulty in putting them together. And if it were then, we suppose that *Judas went out*, ver. 30. to get his men ready, that were to apprehend the Lord Jesus in the garden. But Dr. Lightfoot is clearly of opinion, that this was done and said, even all that is recorded to the end of chap. xiv. not at the *passover supper*, for it is here said, ver. 1. to be *before the feast of the passover*; but at the supper in Bethany, two days before the passover, of which we read, *Matth. xxvi. 2, 6.* at which Mary the second time anointed Christ's head with the remainder of her box of ointment. Or it might be at some other supper the night before the passover, not as that was in the house of *Simon the leper*, but in his own lodgings, where he had none but his disciples about him, and could be more free with them.

In these verses we have the story of Christ's *washing his disciples feet*; it was an action of a singular nature; no miracle, but a miracle of humility. Mary had now newly anointed his head, now left his acceptance of that, should look like taking state, he presently balanceth it with this act of abasement; but why would Christ do this? If the disciples feet needed washing, they could do it themselves; a wise man will not do a thing that looks odd, and unusual, but for very good causes and considerations. We are sure it was not in a humour or a frolick that this was done; no, the transaction was very solemn, and carried on with a deal of seriousness; and four reasons are here intimated why Christ did this. (1.) That he might testify his love to his disciples, ver. 1, 2. (2.) That he might give an instance of his own voluntary humility and condescension, ver. 3, 4, 5. (3.) That he might signify to them spiritual washing, which is referred to in his discourse with Peter, ver. 6—11. (4.) That he might set them an example, ver. 12—17. And the opening of these four reasons for it, will take in the exposition of the whole story.

First, Christ washed his disciples feet, *that he might give a proof of that great love wherewith he loved them: loved them to the end*, ver. 1, 2.

(1.) It is here laid down as an undoubted truth, that our Lord Jesus having loved his own which were in the world, loved them to the end, ver. 1.

1. This is true of the disciples that were his immediate followers, in particular the twelve. These were *his own in the world*, his family, his school, his bosom friends. Children he had none to call his own, but he adopted them, and took them as *his own*. He had those that were *his own in the other world*, but he left them for a time to look after his own in this world. These he loved, he called them into fellowship with himself, conversed familiarly with them, was always tender of them, and of their comfort and reputation. He allowed them to be very free with him, and bore with their infirmities. He loved them to the end, continued his love to them as long as he lived, and after his resurrection; he never took away his loving kindness. Though there were some persons of quality that espoused his cause, he did not lay aside his old friends to make room for new ones, but still stuck to his poor fishermen. They were weak and defective in knowledge and grace, dull and forgetful, and yet though he reprov'd them often, he never ceased to love them, and take care of them.

(2.) It is true of all believers, for these twelve patriarchs were the representatives of all the tribes of God's spiritual Israel. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus hath a people in the world that are *his own*; his own,

for they were given him by the Father, he has purchased them, and paid dear for them, and he hath set them apart for himself; *his own*, for they have devoted themselves to him as a peculiar people. *His own*. Where *his own* were spoken of that received him not, it is *τὰ ἴδια*, *his own things*, as a man's cattle are his own, which yet he may, when he pleaseth, alter the property of. But here it is, *τὰς ἰδίους*, *his own persons*, as a man's wife and children are his own; to whom he stands in a constant relation. 2. Christ has a dear love for *his own* that are in the world. He did love them with a love of good will when he gave himself for their redemption. He doth love them with a love of complacency, when he admits them into communion with himself. Though they are *in this world*, a world of darkness and distance, of sin and corruption, yet he loves them. He was now going to *his own in heaven*, the spirits of just men made perfect there, but he seems most concerned for *his own on earth*, because they most needed his care: the sickly child is most indulged. 3. Those whom Christ loves he loves to the end; he is constant in his love to his people; he rests in his love. He loves with an everlasting love, Jer. xxxi. 3. from everlasting in the counsels of it, to everlasting in the consequences of it. Nothing can separate a believer from the love of Christ; he loves his own, *εἰς τὸ τέλος*, unto perfection; for he will perfect what concerns them, will bring them to that world where love is perfect.

2. Christ manifested his love to them by washing their feet; as that good woman (*Luke vii. 42.*) shewed her love to Christ by washing his feet, and wiping them. Thus he would shew that as his love to them was constant, so it was condescending, and that in prosecution of of the designs of it he was willing to humble himself; and that the glories of his exalted state, which he was now entering upon, should be no obstruction at all to the favour he bare to his chosen: And thus he would confirm the promise he had made to all the saints, that he would make them sit down to meat, and would come forth and serve them, *Luke xii. 37.* would put honour upon them as great and surprising as for the Lord to serve his servants. The disciples had just now betrayed the weakness of their love to him, in grudging the ointment that was poured upon his head, *Matth. xxvi. 28.* yet he presently gives this proof of his love to them. Our infirmities are foils to Christ's kindnesses, and set them off.

3. He chose this time to do it a little before his last passover, for two reasons:

1. Because now he knew that his hour was come, which he had long expected, when he should depart out of this world to the Father. Observe here,

(1.) The change that was to pass over our Lord Jesus, he must depart. This began at his death, but was completed at his ascension. As Christ himself, so all believers, by virtue of their union with him, when they depart out of the world, are absent from the body, go to the Father, are present with the Lord. It is a departure out of the world, this unkind, injurious world, this faithless, treacherous world; this world of labour, toil, and temptation; this vale of tears; and it is going to the Father, to the vision of the Father of spirits, and the fruition of him as ours.

(2.) The time of this change; *his hour was come*. It is sometimes called his enemies hour, *Luke xxii. 53.* the honour of their triumph; sometimes *his hour*, the hour of his triumph; the hour he had had in his eye all along. The time of his sufferings was fixed to an hour, and the continuance of them but for an hour.

(3.) His foresight of it; *He knew that his hour was come*; he knew from the beginning that it would come, and when, but now he knew that it was come. We know not when our hour will come, and therefore what we have to do in habitual preparation for it, ought never to be undone; but when we know by the harbingers that our hour is come, we must vigorously apply ourselves to an actual preparation as our Master did, *2 Pet. iii. 14.*

Now it was in the immediate foresight of his departure that he washed his disciples feet; that as his own head was anointed just now against the day of his burial, so their feet might be washed against the day of their consecration by the descent of the Holy Ghost fifty days after, as the priests were washed, *Lev. viii. 6.* When we see our day approaching, we should do what good we can to those we leave behind.

2. Because the devil had now put it into the head of Judas to betray him, ver. 2. These words in a parenthesis may be considered,

1. As tracing Judas's treason to its original; it was a sin of such a nature that it evidently bore the devil's image and superscription. What ways of access the devil has to mens hearts, and by what methods he darts in his suggestions, and mingles them undiscerned with those thoughts which are the natives of the heart, we cannot tell? But there are some sins in their own nature so exceeding sinful, and to which there is so little temptation from the world and the flesh, that it is plain Satan lays the egg of them in a heart disposed to be the nest to hatch them in. For Judas to betray such a master so cheaply, and upon no provocation, was such downright enmity to God, as could not be forged but by Satan himself, who thereby thought to ruin the Redeemer's kingdom, but it proved the ruin of his own.

2. As intimating a reason why Christ now washed his disciples feet. 1. Judas being now resolved to betray him, the time of his departure could not be far off; if this matter be determined, it is easy to infer with St. Paul, *I am now ready to be offered*. Note, The more malicious we perceive our enemies to be against us, the more industrious we should be to prepare for the worst that may come.

2. Judas



2. Judas being now got into the snare, and the devil aiming at Peter, and the rest of them, (*Luke xxii. 31.*) Christ would fortify his own against him. If the wolf have seized one of the flock, it is time for the shepherd to look well to the rest. Antidotes must be stirring when the infection is begun. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that the disciples had learned of Judas to murmur at the anointing of Christ (compare *John xii. 4.* with *Matt. xxvi. 8.*) Now lest they that had learned that of him should learn worse, he fortifies them by a lesson of humility against his most dangerous assaults. 3. Judas, who was now plotting to betray him, was *one of the twelve*. Now Christ would hereby shew that he did not design to cast them all off for the faults of one. Though one of their college had a devil, and was a traitor, yet they should fare never the worse for that. Christ loves his church, though there are hypocrites in it, and had still a kindness for his disciples, though there was a Judas among them, and he *knew it*.

Secondly, Christ washed his disciples feet that he might give an instance of his own wonderful humility, and shew how lowly and condescending he was, and let all the world know how low he could stoop in love to his own. This is intimated, *ver. 3, 4, 5.* *Jesus knowing*, and now actually considering, and perhaps discoursing of his honours as Mediator, and telling his friends that *the Father had given all things into his hand*, &c. he *riseth from supper*, and, to the great surprize of the company, who wondered what he was going to do, *washed his disciples feet*.

1. Here is the *rightful advancement* of the Lord Jesus. Glorious things are here said of Christ as Mediator.

(1.) *The Father had given all things into his hands*; had given him a propriety in all, and a power over all as possessor of heaven and earth, in pursuance of the great designs of his undertaking; see *Matth. xi. 27.* The accommodation and arbitration of all matters in variance between God and man, was committed into his hands as the great umpire and referee; and the administration of the kingdom of God among men, in all the branches of it, was committed to him; so that all acts, both of government and judgment were to pass through his hands; he is *heir of all things*.

(2.) He *came from God*; this implies that he was in the beginning with God, and had a being and glory, not only before he was born into this world, but before the world itself was born; and that when he came into the world he came as God's ambassador, with a commission from him. He came *from God* as the *Son of God*, and the *sent of God*. The Old Testament prophets were raised up, and employed *for God*, but Christ came directly from him.

(3.) He *went to God*, to be glorified with him, with the same glory which he had with God from eternity. That which comes *from God* shall *go to God*; they that are born *from* heaven, are bound *for* heaven. As Christ came *from God* to be an agent for *him* on earth, so he went to God to be an agent for *us* in heaven; and it is a comfort to us, to think how welcome he was there; he was brought near to the antient of days, *Dan. vii. 13.* And it was said to him, *sit thou at my right hand*, *Psal. cx. 1.*

(4.) He *knew* all this; was not like a prince in the cradle, that knows nothing of the honour he is born to, or like Moses, who wist not *that his face shone*; no, he had a full view of all the honours of his exalted state, and yet stooped thus low. But how doth this come in here?

1. As an *inducement* to him now quickly to leave what lessons and legacies he had to leave to his disciples, because his hour was now come, when he must take his leave of them, and be exalted above that familiar converse which he had now with them, *ver. 1.*

2. It may come in as that which *supported him* under his sufferings, and carried him chearfully through this sharp encounter. Judas was now betraying him, and he knew it, and knew what would be the consequence of it; yet knowing also *that he came from God, and went to God*, he did not draw back, but went on chearfully.

3. It seems to come in as a *foil to his condescension*, to make it the more admirable. The reasons of divine grace are sometimes represented in scripture as strange and surprizing, as *Isa. lvii. 17, 18.* *Hes. ii. 13, 14.* so here that is given as an inducement to Christ to *stoop*, which should rather have been a reason for his *taking state*, for God's thoughts are not as ours. Compare with this, those passages which preface the most signal instances of condescending grace, with the displays of divine glory, as *Psal. lxxviii. 4, 5.* *Isa. lvii. 15.* — *lxvii. 1, 2.*

1. Here is the *voluntary abasement* of our Lord Jesus notwithstanding this. *Jesus knowing* his own glory as God, and his own authority and power as Mediator, one would think it should follow, *He riseth from supper*, lays aside his ordinary garments, calls for robes, bids them keep their distance, and do him homage; no, quite contrary, when he considered this, he gave the greatest instance of humility. Note, (1.) A well grounded assurance of heaven and happiness, instead of puffing a man with pride, will make and keep him very humble. (2.) Those that would be found conformable to Christ, and partakers of his Spirit, must study to keep their minds low in the midst of the greatest advancements. Now that which Christ humbled himself to, was, to *wash his disciples feet*.

1. The *action itself* was mean and servile, and that which servants of the lowest rank were employed in. *Let thine handmaid* (saith Abigail) *be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord*; let me be in the meanest employments, 1 *Sam. xxv. 41.* If he had washed their *hands* or *faces* it had been great condescension: Elisha

poured water on the hands of Elijah, 2 *Kings iii. 11.* but for Christ to stoop to such a piece of drudgery as this, we may well be amazed at it. Thus he would teach us to think nothing below us, wherein we may be serviceable to God's glory, and the good of our brethren.

2. The *condescension* was so much the *greater*, that he did this for *his own disciples*, who in themselves were of a low and despicable condition, not curious about their bodies; their feet, it is likely, seldom washed, and therefore very dirty. In relation to him they were his scholars, his servants, and such as should have *washed his feet*, whose dependence was upon him, and their expectations from him. Many of great spirits otherwise will do a mean thing to curry favour with their superiors, they rise by stooping, and climb by cringing; but for Christ to do this to *his disciples*, could be no act of policy or complaisance, but pure humility.

3. He *rose from supper to do it*. Though we translate it, *ver. 2.* *supper being ended*; it might be better read, there being a *supper made*, or, he *being at supper*, for he sat down again, *ver. 12.* and we find him dipping a sop, *ver. 26.* so that he did it *in the midst* of his meal, and thereby taught us, (1.) Not to reckon it a disturbance, or any just cause of uneasiness to be called from our meal to do God or our brother any real service, esteeming the discharge of our duty *more than our necessary food*, *John iv. 34.* Christ would not leave his *preaching* to oblige his nearest relations, *Mark iii. 33.* but would leave his *supper* to shew his love to his disciples. (2.) Not to be *over nice* about our meat. It would have turned many a squeamish stomach to wash dirty feet at supper-time; but Christ did it, not that we might learn to be *rude* and *lovenly*, cleanliness and godliness will do well together; but to teach us, not to be *curious*, not to indulge, but mortify the delicacy of the appetite, giving good manners their *due place* and no more.

4. He put himself into the *garb of a servant* to do it; he *laid aside* his loose and upper garments, that he might apply himself to this service the more expeditely. We must address ourselves to duty as those that are resolved not to *take state*, but to *take pains*; we must *divest* ourselves of every thing that would either feed our pride, or hang in our way, and hinder us in what we have to do; must *gird up the loins of our mind*, as those that in earnest buckle to business.

5. He did it with all the *humble ceremony* that could be, went through all the parts of the service distinctly, and balked none of them; he did it as if he had been *used* thus to serve; did it himself alone, and had none to minister to him in it. He *girded himself with the towel*, as servants throw a napkin on their arm, or put an apron before them; he *poured water into the bason* out of the water-pots that stood by, *John ii. 6.* and then *washed their feet*; and, to complete the service, *wiped them*. Some think he did not wash the feet of them all, but only four or five of them, that being thought sufficient to answer the end; but I see nothing to countenance this conjecture, for in other places where he did make a difference it is taken notice of; and his washing the feet of them *all* without exception, teacheth us a catholic and extensive charity to all Christ's disciples, even the least.

6. Nothing appears to the contrary, but that he washed the feet of Judas among the rest, for he was present, *ver. 26.* It is the character of a *widow indeed*, that she had *washed the saints feet*, 1 *Tim. v. 10.* and there is some comfort in that, but the blessed Jesus here washed the feet of a sinner, the worst of sinners; the worst to him, that was at this time contriving to betray him.

Many interpreters make Christ's washing his disciples feet a representation of *his whole undertaking*. He knew that he was equal with God, and all things were his, and yet he rose from his table in glory, laid aside his robes of light, girded himself with our nature, took upon him the form of a servant, *came not to be ministered to, but to minister*; poured out his blood, poured out his soul unto death, and thereby prepared a laver to wash us from our sins, *Rev. i. 5.*

Thirdly, Christ washed his disciples feet that he might *signify* to them *spiritual washing*, and the cleansing of the soul from the pollutions of sin. This is plainly intimated in his discourse with Peter upon it, *ver. 6—11.* In which we may observe,

1. The surprize Peter was in when he saw his Master go about this mean service. *Ver. 6.* *Then comes he to Simon Peter*, with his towel and bason, and bid him put out his feet to be washed. Chrysostom conjectures that he washed the feet of Judas first, who readily admitted it, and was pleased to see his Master so disparage himself. It is most probable when he *went about* this service (which is all that is meant by his *beginning* to wash, *ver. 5.*) he took Peter first; and the rest would not have suffered it, if they had not first heard it explained in what passed between Christ and Peter.

Whether Christ came first to Peter or no, when he did come to him, Peter startled at the proposal, *Lord* (saith he) *dost thou wash my feet?* Here is an emphasis to be laid upon the persons, *thou* and *me*; and the placing of the words is observable, *οὐ μὲν*, what, thou mine? *Tu mihi lavas pedes? Quid est tu? Quid est mihi? Cogitanda sunt potius quam dicenda.* Aug. in loc. What *thou?* our Lord and Master, whom we know, and believe to be the Son of God, and Saviour and ruler of the world, do this for *me*, a worthless worm of the earth, a *sinful man*, O Lord. Shall those hands wash my feet, which with a touch have cleansed lepers, given sight to the blind, and raised the dead? So Theophylact, and from him Dr. Taylor. Very willingly would Peter have taken the bason and towel, and washed his Master's feet, and been proud of the honour, *Luke xvii. 7, 8.* This had been natural and regular, for *my master* to wash my feet, is such a



solecism as never was; such a paradox as I cannot understand; *Is this the manner of men?* Note, Christ's condescensions, especially his condescensions to us, wherein we find ourselves taken notice of by his grace, are justly the matter of our admiration, *John xiv. 27. Who am I, Lord God? And what is my father's house?*

2. The immediate satisfaction Christ gave to this question of surprise, which was at the least sufficient to silence his objections, *ver. 7. What I do thou knowest not now, but shalt know hereafter.* Here are two reasons why Peter must submit to what Christ was doing.

(1.) Because he was at present in the dark concerning it, and ought not to oppose what he did not understand, but acquiesce in the will and wisdom of one who could give a good reason for all he said and did. Christ would teach Peter an *implicit obedience*; what I do, thou knowest not now, and therefore art no competent judge of it, but must believe it is well done, because I do it. Note, Consciousness to ourselves of the darkness we labour under, and our inability to judge of what God doth, should make us sparing and modest in our censures of his proceeding; see *Heb. xi. 8.*

(2.) Because there was something considerable in it, which he should hereafter know the meaning of. *Thou shalt know hereafter,* what need thou hast of being washed, when thou shalt be guilty of the heinous sin of denying me. So some. Thou shalt know, when, in the discharge of the office of an apostle, thou wilt be employed in washing off from those under thy charge the sins and defilements of their earthly affections: So Dr. Hammond. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus doth many things, which even his own disciples do not for the present know the meaning of, but they shall know afterwards; what he did, when he became man for us, and what he did when he became a worm, and no man for us; what he did when he lived our life, and what he did when he laid it down, could not be understood till afterward, and then it appeared that it behoved him, *Heb. ii. 17.* Subsequent providences explain preceding ones; and we see afterwards what was the kind tendency of events that seemed most cross: And the way which we thought was about, proved the right way. 2. Christ's washing his disciples feet, had a significancy in it, which they themselves did not understand till afterwards; when Christ explained it to be a specimen of the laver of regeneration, and till the Spirit was poured out upon them from on high. We must let Christ take his own way, both in ordinances and providences, and we shall find in the issue it was the best way.

3. Peter's peremptory refusal, notwithstanding this, to let Christ wash his feet, *ver. 8. Thou shalt by no means wash my feet; no, never.* So it is in the original. It is the language of a fixed resolution.

Now, 1. Here was a shew of humility, and modesty; Peter herein seemed to have, and no doubt he really had, a great respect for his Master, as he had, *Luke v. 8.* Thus many are beguiled of their reward in a voluntary humility, *Col. ii. 18, 23.* Such a self-denial as Christ neither appoints, nor accepts; for, 2. Under this shew of humility there was a real contradiction to the will of the Lord Jesus. *I will wash thy feet,* saith Christ; but thou never shalt, saith Peter, it is not a fitting thing, so making himself wiser than Christ. It is not humility, but infidelity, to put away the offers of the gospel, as if too rich to be made us, or too good news to be true.

4. Christ's insisting upon his offer, and a good reason given to Peter, why he should accept it; *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.* Which may be taken,

(1.) As a severe caution against disobedience. *If I wash thee not,* i. e. if thou continue refractory, and will not comply with thy Master's will in so small a matter, thou shalt not be owned as one of my disciples, but be justly discarded and cashiered for not observing orders. Thus several of the ancients understand it; if Peter will make himself wiser than his Master, and dispute the commands he ought to obey, he doth in effect renounce his allegiance, and say as they did, *What portion have we in David?* In the Son of David, and so shall his doom be; he shall have no part in him. Let him use no more manners than doth him good, for to obey is better than sacrifice, *1 Sam. xv. 22.* Or,

(2.) As a declaration of the necessity of spiritual washing; and so I think it is to be understood. *If I wash not thy soul from the pollution of sin, thou hast no part with me,* no interest in me, no communion with me, no benefit by me. Note, All those, and those only, that are spiritually washed by Christ, have a part in Christ.

(1.) To have a part in Christ, or with Christ, has all the happiness of a Christian bound up in it, to be partakers of Christ, *Heb. iii. 14.* to share in those inestimable privileges which result from an union with him, and relation to him. It is that good part, the having of which is the one thing needful. 2. It is necessary to our having a part in Christ, that he wash us. All those whom Christ owns and saves, he justifies and sanctifies, and both are included in his washing them. We cannot partake of his glory, if we partake not of his merit and righteousness, and of his Spirit and grace.

5. Peter's more than submission, his earnest request to be washed by Christ, *ver. 9.* If this be the meaning of it, *Lord, wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.* How soon is Peter's mind changed, when the mistake of his understanding was rectified, the corrupt resolution of his will was soon altered. Let us therefore not be peremptory in any resolve (but only in our resolve to follow Christ) because we may soon see cause to retract it; but cautious in taking up a purpose we will be tenacious of. Observe,

(1.) How ready Peter is to recede from what he had said, Lord, what a fool was I to speak such a hasty word! Now the washing of

No. xcvi.

him appeared to be an act of Christ's authority and grace, he admits it; but disliked it, when it seemed only an act of humiliation. Note, (1.) Good men, when they see their error, will not be loth to recant it. (2.) Sooner or later Christ will bring all to be of his mind.

(2.) How importunate he is for the purifying grace of the Lord Jesus, and the universal influence of it, even upon his hands and head. Note, A divorce from Christ, and an exclusion from having a part in him, is the most formidable evil in the eyes of all that are enlightened, for the fear of which they will be persuaded to any thing. And for fear of this, we should be earnest with God in prayer, that he will wash us; will justify and sanctify us. Lord, that I may not be cut off from thee, make me fit for thee, by the washing of regeneration, Lord, wash, not my feet only, from the gross pollutions that cleave to them, but also my hands and my head, from the lesser spots which they have contracted, and the undiscerned filth which proceeds by perspiration from the body itself. Note, Those who truly desire to be sanctified, desire to be sanctified throughout, and to have the whole man, with all its parts and powers, purified, *1 Thes. v. 23.*

6. Christ's further explication of this sign, as it represented spiritual washing.

1. With reference to his disciples that were faithful to him, *ver. 10.* He that is washed all over in the bath (as was frequently practised in those countries) when he returns to his house, needeth not save to wash his feet, his hands and head having been washed, and he having only dirtied his feet in walking home. Peter had gone from one extreme to the other; at first he would not let Christ wash his feet; and now he overlooks what Christ had done for him in his baptism, and what was signified thereby, and cries out to have his hands and head washed; now Christ directs him into the meaning; he must have his feet washed, but not his hands and head.

(1.) See here what is the comfort and privilege of such as are in a justified state, they are washed by Christ, and are clean every whit, i. e. they are graciously accepted of God, as if they were so; and though they offend, yet they need not, upon their repentance, to be again put into a justified state, for then should they often be baptized. The evidence of a justified state may be clouded, and the comfort of it suspended; when yet the charter of it is not vacated or taken away. Though we have occasion to repent daily, God's gifts and callings are without repentance. The heart may be swept and garnished, and yet still remain the devil's palace, but if it be washed, it belongs to Christ, and he will not lose it.

(2.) See what ought to be the daily care of those, who through grace, are in a justified state, and that is to wash their feet. To cleanse themselves from the guilt they contract daily, through infirmity and inadvertency, by the renewed exercise of repentance, with a believing application of the virtue of Christ's blood. We must also wash our feet by constant watchfulness against every thing that is defiling, for we must cleanse our way, and cleanse our feet, by taking heed thereto, *Psal. cxix. 9.* The priests, when they were consecrated, were washed with water; and though they did not need afterwards to be so washed all over, yet, whenever they went in to minister, they must wash their feet and hands at the laver, on pain of death, *Exod. xxx. 19, 20.* The provision made for our cleansing, should not make us presumptuous, but the more cautious; *I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* From yesterday's pardon, we should fetch an argument against this day's temptations.

2. With reflexion upon Judas; and ye are clean, but not all, *ver. 10, 11.* He pronounceth his disciples clean, clean through the word he had spoken to them, *John xv. 3.* He washed them himself, and then said, *Ye are clean;* but he excepts Judas; not all; they were all baptized, even Judas, yet not all clean; many have the sign, that have not the thing signified. Note, (1.) Even among those who are called disciples of Christ, and profess relation to him, there are some who are not clean, *Prov. xxx. 12.* (2.) The Lord knows them that are his, and them that are not, *2 Tim. ii. 19.* The eye of Christ can separate between the precious and the vile, the clean and the unclean. (3.) When those that have called themselves disciples, afterwards prove traitors, their apostasy, at last, is a certain evidence of their hypocrisy all along. (4.) Christ sees it necessary to let his disciples know that they are not all clean; that we may all be jealous over ourselves, *Is it I? Lord, is it I,* that am among the clean, yet not clean? and that when hypocrites are discovered, it may be no surprize or stumbling to us.

Fourthly, Christ washed his disciples feet, to set before us an example: This explication he gave of what he had done, when he had done it, *ver. 12—17.*

1. Observe with what solemnity he gave an account of the meaning of what he had done, *ver. 12.* After he had washed their feet, he said, *Know ye what I have done?*

(1.) He adjourned the explication till he had finished the transaction, (1.) To try their submission and implicit obedience. What he did, they should not know till after, that they might learn to acquiesce in his will when they could not give a reason for it. (2.) Because it was proper to finish the riddle before he unriddled it. Thus, as to his whole undertaking, when his sufferings were finished, he had resumed the garments of his exalted state, and was ready to sit down again, then he opened the understandings of his disciples, and poured out his Spirit, *Luke xxiv. 46.*

(2.) Before he explained it, he asked them if they could construe it; *Know ye what I have done to you?* He put this question to them,

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them, not only to make them sensible of their ignorance, and the need they had to be instructed, (as *Zech. iv. 5, 13. Knowest thou not what these be? and I said, No, my Lord*) but to raise their desires and expectations of instruction. *I would have you know*, and if you will give attention, I will tell you. Note, It is the will of Christ that *sacramental signs* should be explained, and that his people should be acquainted with the meaning of them; otherwise though never so significant, to them who know not the thing signified, they are insignificant. Hence they are directed to ask, *What mean ye by this service?* *Exod. xii. 26.*

2. Observe what he grounds that which he had to say upon, *ver. 13. You call me Master and Lord*, you give me those titles, in speaking of me, in speaking to me, and you say well, for so I am; you are in the relation of scholars to me, and I do the part of a master to you. Note, 1. Jesus Christ is our *Master and Lord*; he that is our Redeemer and Saviour, is, in order to that, our Lord and Master. He is our *Master*, *διδάσκαλος*, our teacher and instructor, in all necessary truths and rules, as a prophet revealing to us the will of God. He is our *Lord*, *κύριος*, or ruler and owner, that has authority over us, and propriety in us. 2. It becomes the disciples of Christ to call him *Master and Lord*, not in compliment, but in reality; not by constraint, but with delight. Devout Mr. Herbert, when he mentioned the name of *Christ*, used to add, *my Master*; and thus expresseth himself concerning it in one of his poems; *How sweetly doth my Master sound, my Master! As amber-greese leaves a rich scent unto the taster, so do these words a sweet content; an oriental fragrant, my Master.* 3. Our calling Christ Master and Lord, is an obligation upon us to receive and observe the instructions he gives us. Christ would thus pre-engage their obedience to a command that was displeasing to flesh and blood. If Christ be our Master and Lord, be so by our own consent, and we have oft called him so, we are bound in honour and honesty to be observant of him.

3. Observe the lesson which Christ hereby taught, *ye also ought to wash one another's feet*, *ver. 14.*

1. Some have understood this literally, and have thought these words amount to the institution of a standing ordinance in the church; that Christians should, in a solemn religious manner, *wash one another's feet*, in token of their condescending love to one another. St. Ambrose took it so, and practised it in the church of Milan. St. Austin saith, that those Christians who did not do it with their hands, yet (he hoped) did it with their hearts, in humility; but he saith it is much better to do it with the hands also, when there is occasion, as *1 Tim. v. 10.* what Christ has done, Christians should not disdain to do. Calvin saith, that the pope, in the annual observing of this ceremony on Thursday in the passion week, is rather Christ's ape than his follower, for the duty enjoined in conformity to Christ, was *mutual*; *wash one another's feet*. And Jansenius saith, it is done, *Frigide & dissimiliter*.

2. But doubtless it is to be understood figuratively; it is an instructive sign, but not sacramental, as the eucharist. This was a parable to the eye; and three things our Master hereby designed to teach us.

(1.) A *humble condescension*; we must learn of our Master to be lowly in heart, *Matt. xi. 29.* and walk with all lowliness; we must think meanly of ourselves, and respectfully of our brethren, and nothing below us but sin; we must say of that which seems mean, but has a tendency to the glory of God, and our brethren's good, as David, *2 Sam. vi. 22. If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile.* Christ had often taught his disciples humility, and they had forgot the lesson; but now he teaches them in such a way as sure they could never forget.

(2.) A *condescension to be serviceable*. To wash one another's feet, is to stoop to the meanest offices of love, for the real good and benefit one of another, as blessed Paul, who though *free from all*, made himself *servant of all*; and blessed Jesus, who *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*. We must not grudge to take care and pains, and to spend time, and to diminish ourselves for the good of others that we are not under any particular obligations to, even to our inferiours, and such as are not in a capacity of making us any requital. *Washing the feet* after travel, contributeth both to the decency of the person, and to his ease, so that to wash one another's feet, is to consult both the credit and the comfort one of another; to do what we can, both to advance our brethren's reputation, and to make their minds easy. *1 Cor. x. 24. Heb. vi. 10.* The duty is *mutual*, we must both accept help from our brethren, and afford help to our brethren.

(3.) A *serviceableness* to the sanctification one of another. *Ye ought to wash one another's feet*, from the pollutions of sin. Austin takes it in this sense, and many others. We cannot satisfy for one another's sins, that is peculiar to Christ, but we may help to purify one another from sin. We must, in the first place, *wash ourselves*, this charity must begin at home, *Matt. vi. 5.* but it must not end there, we must show for the failings and follies of our brethren, much more their sins pollutions, *1 Cor. v. 2.* must wash our brethren's polluted feet in tears. We must faithfully reprove them, and do what we can to bring them to repentance, *Gal. vi. 1.* and we must admonish them to prevent their falling into the mire; this is washing their feet.

(4.) Here is the ratifying and enforcing of this command from the example of what Christ had now done. *If I your Lord and Master have done it to you*, you ought to do it to one another. He shows the cogency of this argument in two things.

1. I am your Master, and you are my disciples, and therefore you ought to learn of me, *ver. 15.* for in this, as in other things, *I have given you an example, that you should do to others, as I have done to you.* Observe,

(1.) What a good teacher Christ is: He teacheth by example as well as doctrine, and for that end came into this world, and dwelt among us, that he might set us a copy of all those graces and duties which his holy religion teacheth; and it is a copy without one false stroke. Hereby he made his own laws more intelligible and practicable, and our obedience to them more easy, pleasant, and honourable. Christ is a commander, like Gideon, who said to his soldiers, *Look on me, and do likewise*, *Judg. vii. 17.* like Abimelech, who said, *What ye have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done*, *Judg. ix. 48.* And like Cæsar, who called his soldiers, not *militēs*, but *commilitōnes*,  *fellow-soldiers*, and whose usual word was, not *Ite illuc*, but *venite huc*; not *go*, but *come*.

(2.) What good scholars we must be; we must *do as he hath done*; for therefore he gave us a copy that we should write after it, that we might be as he was in this world, *1 John iv. 17.* and walk as he walked, *1 John ii. 6.* Christ's example herein is to be followed by ministers in particular, in whom the graces of humility and holy love should especially appear, and by the exercise thereof, they effectually serve the interests of their Master, and the ends of their ministry. When Christ sent his apostles abroad as his agents, it was with this charge, that they should not take state upon them, nor carry things with a high hand, but *become all things to all men*, *2 Cor. iv. 5.* What I have done to your dirty feet, that do ye to the polluted souls of sinners; *wash them*. Some who suppose this to be done at the passover supper, think it intimates a rule in admitting communicants to the Lord's-supper, to see that they be first washed and cleansed by reformation and a blameless conversation, and then take them in to compass God's altar. But all Christians likewise are here taught to condescend to each other in love, and to do it as Christ did it, unasked, unpaid; we must not be mercenary in the services of love, nor do them with reluctance.

2. I am your Master, and you are my disciples, and therefore you cannot think it below you to do that, how mean soever it may seem, which you have seen me do, for, *ver. 16. The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent*, though sent with all the pomp and power of an ambassador, yet is he not greater than him that sent him. Christ had urged this, *Matt. x. 24, 25.* as a reason why they should not think it strange if they suffered as he did; here he urgeth it as a reason why they should not think much to humble themselves as he did. What he did not think a disparagement to him, they must not think a disparagement to them. Perhaps the disciples inwardly disgusted this precept of washing one another's feet, as inconsistent with that dignity they expected shortly to be preferred to; to obviate such thoughts, Christ minds them of their place as his servants; they were not better men than their Master, and what was consistent with his dignity, was much more consistent with theirs. If he were humble and condescending, it ill became them to be proud and assuming. Note, 1. We must take good heed to our selves, lest Christ's gracious condescensions to us, and advancements of us, through the corruption of nature, occasion us to think any high thoughts of ourselves, or low thoughts of him. We need to be put in mind of this, that we are not greater than our Lord. 2. Whatever our Master was pleased to condescend to in favour to us, we should much more condescend to in conformity to him. Christ, by humbling himself, has dignified humility, and put an honour upon it, and obliged his followers to think nothing below them but sin. We commonly say to those who disdain to do such or such a thing, *as good as you have done it*, and been never the worse thought of; and true indeed it is, if our Master has done it. When we see our Master serving, we cannot but see how ill it becomes us to be domineering.

Lastly, Our Saviour closes this part of his discourse with an intimation of the necessity of their obedience to these instructions, *If ye know these things; or, seeing ye know them, happy are ye, if ye do them.* Most people think, happy are they that rise and rule. Washing one another's feet, will never get estates and preferments; but Christ saith, for all that, happy are they that stoop, and obey, *If ye know these things.* That may be understood either as speaking doubtfully, whether they know them or no; so strong was their conceit of a temporal kingdom, that it was a question whether they could entertain the notion of a duty so contrary to that conceit; or, as taking it for granted, that they did know these things; since they had such excellent precepts given them, recommended by such an excellent pattern, it will be necessary to the completing of their happiness, that they practise accordingly.

1. This is applicable to the commands of Christ in general. Note, Though it is a great advantage to know our duty, yet we shall come short of happiness if we do not do our duty. Knowing is in order to doing; that knowledge therefore is vain and fruitless, which is not reduced to practice; nay, it will aggravate the sin and ruin, *Luke xii. 47, 48. James iv. ult.* It is knowing and doing that will demonstrate us of Christ's kindred, and wise builders. See *Psal. ciii. 17, 18.*

2. It is to be applied especially to this command of humility, and serviceableness. Nothing is better known, or more readily acknowledged than this, that we should be humble; and therefore, though many will own themselves to be passionate and intemperate, few will own themselves to be proud, for it is as inexcusable a sin, and as hateful as any other; and yet how little is to be seen of true humility, and that mutual subjection and condescension, which the law of Christ insists so much upon? Most know these things so well as to expect



expect that *others* should do accordingly to them, yield to them, and serve them, but not so well as to do so *themselves*.

18. ¶ I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me. 19. Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*. 20. Verily, verily I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. 21. When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. 22. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. 23. Now there was leaning on Jesus bosom, one of his disciples whom Jesus loved. 24. Simon Peter therefore beckened to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25. He then lying on Jesus breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26. Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*. 27. And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. 28. Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 29. For some of *them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast: or that he should give something to the poor. 30. He then having received the sop, went immediately out: and it was night.

We have here the discovery of Judas's plot to betray his Master; Christ knew it from the beginning; but now first he discovered it to his disciples, who did not *expect* Christ should be betrayed, though he had often told them so, much less did they suspect that one of them should do it. Now here,

First, Christ gives them a general intimation of it, *ver. 8. I speak not of you all*, I cannot expect you will all do these things, for I know whom I have chosen, and whom I have passed by; but the scripture will be fulfilled, *Psal. xli. 9. He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me*. He doth not yet speak out of the crime, or the criminal, but raiseth their expectations of a further discovery.

1. He intimates to them, that they *were not all right*. He had said, *ver. 10. Ye are clean, but not all*. So here, *I speak not of you all*. Note, What is said of the excellencies of Christ's disciples, cannot be said of all that are called so: The word of Christ is a distinguishing word, which separates *between cattle and cattle*, and will distinguish thousands into hell, who flattered themselves with hopes that they were going to heaven. *I speak not of you all*; you my disciples and followers. Note, There is a mixture of bad with good in the best societies; a Judas among the apostles; it will be so till we come to the blessed society, into which shall enter nothing unclean or disguised.

2. That he himself knew who were right, and who were not; *I know whom I have chosen*, who the few are that are chosen among the many that are called with the common call. Note, 1. They that are chosen, Christ himself had the choosing of them; he nominated the persons he undertook for. 2. They that are chosen, are known to Christ, for he never forgets any, whom he has once had in his thoughts of love, *2 Tim. ii. 19*.

3. That in the treachery of him that proved false to him, the scripture was fulfilled, which takes off very much both the surprize and offence of the thing. Christ took one into his family, whom he foresaw to be a traitor, and did not by effectual grace prevent his being so, *that the scripture might be fulfilled*. Let it not therefore be a stumbling-block to any; for though it do not at all lessen Judas's offence, it may lessen our offence at it. The scripture referred to is, David's complaint of the treachery of some of his enemies; the Jewish expositors generally understand it of Achitophel, and ours from them; and Grotius thinks it intimates, that the death of Judas would be like that of Ahithophel. But because that psalm speaks of David's sickness, which we read nothing of at the time of Ahithophel's deserting him, it may better be understood of some other friend of his that proved false to him. This our Saviour applies to Judas.

1. Judas as an *apostle*, was admitted to the highest privilege; he did *eat bread with Christ*. He was familiar with him, and favoured by him, was one of his family, one of those with whom he was intimately conversant. David saith of his treacherous friend, he did *eat of my bread*, but Christ, being *poor*, had no bread he could properly call *his own*, he saith he did *eat bread with me*; such as he had by the kindness of his friends, that *ministered to him*, his disciples had their share of, Judas among the rest. Wherever he went, Judas was welcome with him, did not dine among servants, but sat at table with his Master, eat of the same dish, drank of the same cup, and in all respects fared as he fared. He eat miraculous bread with him, when the loaves were multiplied, eat the passover with him. Note, All that *eat bread with Christ*, are not his disciples indeed. See *1 Cor. x. 5*.

2. Judas as an apostate was guilty of the basest treachery; he *lift up the heel* against Christ. (1.) He *forsook* him, turned his back upon him, *went* out from the society of his disciples, *ver. 30*. (2.) He *despised* him, shook off the dust of his feet against him, in contempt of him and his gospel. Nay, (3.) He became an enemy to him; spurned at him, as wrestlers do at their adversaries, whom they would overthrow. Note, It is no new thing for those that were Christ's *seeming friends*, to prove his *real enemies*: They who pretended to magnify him, magnify themselves against him. They eat not only the bread of his charity, but the bread of his covenant; yet rebel against him, and thereby prove themselves guilty not only of the basest ingratitude, but the basest treachery and perfidiousness.

Secondly, He gives them a reason why he told them beforehand of the treachery of Judas, *ver. 19. Now I tell you before it come*, before Judas has begun to put his wicked plot in execution, that when it is come to pass, you may, instead of stumbling at it, be confirmed in your *belief*, that *I am he*; he that should come.

1. By his clear and certain foresight of things to come, which in this, as in other instances, he gave incontestable proof of, he proved himself to be the true God, before whom all things are naked and open. Christ foretold that Judas would *betray* him, when there was no ground to suspect such a thing, and so proved himself the eternal *Word*, which is a discernor of the thoughts and *intents of the heart*. The prophecies of the New Testament concerning the apostasy of the latter times, which we have, *2 Theff. ii. 1 Tim. iv.* and in the *Apocalypse*, being evidently *accomplished*, it is a proof that those writings were divinely inspired, and confirms our faith in the whole canon of scripture.

2. By his application of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament to himself, he proved himself to be the true Messiah, to whom *all the prophets bare witness*. Thus it was written, and thus it *behoved Christ to suffer*, and he suffered just as it was written, *Luke xxiv. 25, 26. John viii. 28*.

Thirdly, He gives a word of *encouragement* to his *apostles*, and all his *ministers*; whom he employed in his service, *ver. 20. He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me*. The purport of these words is the same with what we have in other scriptures, but it is not easy to make out their coherence here. (1.) Christ had told his disciples they must humble and abase themselves. Now, saith he, though there may be those that will despise you for your condescension, yet there will be those that will do you honour, and shall be honoured for so doing. They who know themselves *dignified* by Christ's commission, may be content to be *vilified* in the world's opinion. (2.) It is intended to silence the scruples of those, who because there was a traitor among the apostles, would be shy of receiving any of them; for if one of them was false to his Master, whom would any of them be true to? *Ex uno disce omnes*; they are all alike. No, as Christ will think never the worse of them for Judas's crime, so he will stand by them and own them, and will raise up such as shall receive them. They that had received Judas when he was a preacher, and perhaps were converted and edified by his preaching, were never the worse, nor should reflect upon it with any regret, though he afterwards proved a traitor; for he was one *whom Christ sent*. We cannot know what men *are*, much less what they *will be*, but those who appear to be *sent of Christ*, we must receive, till the contrary appear. Though some by entertaining strangers have entertained robbers unawares, yet we must still be hospitable, for thereby some have entertained angels. The abuses put upon our charity, though ordered with never so much discretion, will neither justify our uncharitableness, nor lose us the reward of our charity.

1. We are here encouraged to receive ministers as *sent of Christ*. He that *receiveth whomsoever I send*, though weak and poor, and subject to like passions as others, for as the law, so the gospel, *makes men priests that have infirmity*, yet if he deliver my message, and be regularly called and appointed to do so, and as an officer give himself to the word and prayer; he that entertains him shall be owned as a friend of mine; Christ was now leaving the world, but he would leave an order of men to be his agents, to deliver his word, and those who receive *that* in the light and love of it, receive *him*; to believe the doctrine of Christ, and obey his law, and accept the salvation offered upon the terms proposed; this is receiving those whom Christ sends, and it is *receiving Christ Jesus the Lord* himself.

2. We are here encouraged to receive Christ as *sent of God*: *He that thus receiveth me*, that receiveth Christ in his ministers, receiveth the *Father* also, for they come upon *his errand* likewise, *baptizing* in the name of the *Father*, as well as of the *Son*. Or, in general, *he that receiveth me* as his prince and Saviour, receiveth *him that sent me*, as his portion and felicity. Christ was sent of God, and in embracing his religion, we embrace the *only true* religion.

Fourthly, Christ more particularly notifies to them the plot which one of their number was now hatching against him, *ver. 21. When Jesus had thus said* in general, to prepare them for a more particular discovery, he was *troubled in spirit*, and shewed it by some gesture or sign, and he testified he solemnly declared it (*cum animo testandi*) *one of you shall betray me*; one of you mine apostles, and constant followers. None indeed could be said to *betray* him, but those whom he reposed a confidence in, and were the witnesses of his retirements. This did not determine Judas to the sin by any *fatal* necessity, for though the event did follow according to the prediction, yet not from the



the prediction. Christ is not the author of sin; yet as to this heinous sin of Judas,

1. Christ *forefaw* it; for even that which is secret and future, and hid from the eyes of all living, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ. He knows what is in men better than they do themselves, 2 Kings viii. 12. and therefore sees what will be done by them. 1 knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, Isa. xlviii. 8.

2. He *foretold* it, not only for the sake of the rest of the disciples, but for the sake of Judas himself, that he might take warning, and recover himself out of the snare of the devil. Traitors proceed not in their plots, when they find they are discovered; surely Judas when he finds that his Master *knows* his design, will retreat in time; if not, it will aggravate his condemnation.

3. He spoke of it with a *manifest concern*; he was *troubled in spirit* when he mentioned it. He had often spoken of his own sufferings and death, without any such trouble of spirit as he here discovered when he spoke of the ingratitude and treachery of Judas. This touched him in a tender part. Note, The falls and miscarriages of the disciples of Christ, are a great trouble of spirit to their Master; the sins of Christians are the grief of Christ. What? *One of you betray me?* You that have received from me such distinguishing favours, you that I had reason to think would be firm to me, that have professed such a respect for me, what iniquity have you found in me, that one of you should betray me? This went to his heart, as the unthankfulness of children grieves those who have *nourished and brought them up*, Isa. i. 2. see Psa. xcvi. 10. Isa. lxiii. 10.

Fifthly, The disciples quickly *take the alarm*; they knew their Master would neither deceive them, nor jest with them; and therefore *looked one upon another*, with a manifest concern, *doubting of whom he spake*.

1. By looking *one upon another* they *discovered* the trouble they were in upon this notice given them; it struck such a horror upon them, that they knew not well which way to look, or what to say. They saw their Master *troubled*, and therefore they were troubled. This was at a feast where they were cheerfully entertained; but hence we must be taught to rejoice with trembling, and as though we rejoiced not. When David wept for his son's rebellion, all his followers wept with him, 2 Sam. xv. 30. so Christ's disciples here. Note, That which grieves Christ is, and should be a grief to all that are his; particularly the scandalous miscarriages of those that are called by his name; *who is offended, and I burn not?*

2. Hereby they endeavoured to *discover* the traitor; they looked wistly in one another's faces, to see who *blushed*, or by some disorder in the countenance, manifested guilt in the heart upon this notice. But while those who were faithful had their consciences so clear, that they could *lift up their faces without spot*; he that was false had his conscience so seared, that he was not ashamed, neither could he blush, and so no discovery could be made this way. Christ thus *perplexed* his disciples for a time, and put them into confusion, that he might *humble them, and prove them*, might excite in them a jealousy of themselves, and an indignation at the baseness of Judas. It is good for us sometimes to be put to a gaze, to be put to a pause.

Sixthly, The disciples were solicitous to get their Master to explain himself, and to tell them particularly whom he meant, for nothing but that can put them out of their present pain, for each of them thought they had as much reason to suspect themselves as any of their brethren; now,

1. Of all the disciples, John was *most fit to ask*, because he was the favourite, and sat next his Master, ver. 23. *There was leaning on Jesus bosom, one of his disciples whom Jesus loved*. It appears that this was John, by comparing chap. xxi. 20.

Observe, (1.) The particular kindness which Jesus had for him; he was known by this periphrasis, that he was *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. He loved them all, ver. 1. but John was particularly dear to him. His name signifies *gracious*. Daniel who was honoured with the revelations of the Old Testament, as John of the New, was a *man greatly beloved*, Dan. ix. 23. Note, Among the disciples of Christ, some are dearer to him than others.

(2.) His place and posture at this time. He was *leaning on Jesus's bosom*. Some say it was the fashion in those countries to sit at meat in a leaning posture, so that the second lay in the bosom of the first, and so on; which doth not seem probable to me, for in such a posture as that they could neither eat nor drink conveniently; but whether that were so or no, John now *leaned in his bosom*, and it seems to be an extraordinary expression of endearment used at this time. Note, There are some of Christ's disciples whom he lays in his bosom, who have more free and intimate communion with him than others. The Father loved the Son, and laid him *in his bosom*, John i. 18. and believers are in like manner one with Christ, John xvii. 21. This honour all the saints shall have shortly, in the bosom of Abraham. They who lay themselves at *Christ's feet*, he will lay them in *his bosom*.

(3.) Yet he conceals his name, because he himself was the penman of the story; he puts this instead of his name, to shew that he was *pleased with it*; it is his title of honour, that he was *the disciple whom Jesus loved*; as in David's and Solomon's court, there was one that was the *king's friend*; yet he doth not put his name down, to shew that he was not *proud of it*, nor would seem to boast of it. Paul in a like case saith, *I knew a man in Christ*.

Of all the disciples Peter was most *forward* to know, ver. 24. Peter sitting at some distance, *beckoned* to John, by some sign or

other, to ask: Peter was generally the *leading* man, most apt to put himself forth; and where mens natural tempers lead them to be thus bold in answering and asking, if it be kept under the laws of humility and wisdom, it makes men very serviceable; God gives his gifts variously; but that the *forward* men in the church may not think too well of themselves, nor the *modest* be discouraged, it must be noted that it was not Peter, but John that was the *beloved disciple*. Peter was desirous to know, not only that he might be sure it was *not he*, but that knowing who it was, they might *withdraw* from him, and *guard* against him, and, if possible, *prevent* his design. It were a desirable thing we would think to know who in the church will deceive us; yet let this suffice, Christ knows, though we do not. The reason why Peter did not ask himself, was, because John had a much fairer opportunity, by the advantage of his seat at table, to whisper the question into the ear of Christ, and to receive a like private answer. It is good to improve our interest in those that are near to Christ, and to engage their prayers for us. Do we know any that we have reason to think lie in Christ's bosom? let us beg of them to speak a good word for us.

3. The question was asked accordingly, ver. 25. *He then lying at the breast of Jesus*, and so having the convenience of whispering with him, *saith unto him, Lord, who is it?* Now here John shews,

1. A regard to his fellow-disciple, and to the motion he made. Though Peter had not the honour he had at this time, yet he did not therefore disdain to take the hint, and intimation he gave him. Note, They who lie *in Christ's bosom* may often learn from those who lie *at his feet* something that will be profitable for them, and be minded of that which they did not of themselves think of. John was willing to gratify Peter herein, having so fair an opportunity for it. As every one hath received the gift, so let him minister the same for a common good, Rom. xii. 6.

2. A reverence of his Master. Though he whispered that in Christ's ear, yet he called him *Lord*; the familiarity he was admitted to did not at all lessen his respect for his Master. It becomes us to use a reverence in expression, and to observe a *decorum*, even in our secret devotions, which no eye is a witness to, as well as in publick assemblies. The more intimate communion gracious souls have with Christ, the more sensible they are of his worthiness, and their own unworthiness, as Gen. xviii. 27.

4. Christ gave a *speedy answer* to this question, but whispering it in John's ear, for it appears, ver. 29. that the rest were still ignorant of the matter. *He it is to whom I shall give a sop*, ἰσχυριον, a morsel, a crust; *when I have dipped it in the sauce*. And *when he had dipped the sop*, John strictly observing his motions, he *gave it to Judas*; and Judas took it readily enough, not suspecting the design of it, but glad of a favoury bit to make up his mouth with.

1. Christ notified the traitor by a *sign*. He could have told John by name who he was; the adversary and enemy is that wicked Judas, he is the traitor, and none but he; but thus he would exercise the observation of John, and intimate what need his ministers have of a spirit of discerning; for the false brethren we are to stand upon our guard against, are not made known to us *by words*, but *by signs*, they are to be known to us by *their fruits*, by *their spirits*; which requires great diligence and care to form a right judgment upon them.

2. That sign was a *sop*, which Christ *gave him*, a very proper sign, because it was the fulfilling of the scripture, ver. 18. that the traitor should be one that *eat bread with him*, that was at this time a fellow-commoner with him. It had likewise a significancy in it, and teacheth us, (1.) That Christ sometimes gives *sops* to traitors; worldly riches, honours and pleasures are *sops* (if I may so speak) which providence sometimes gives into the hands of *wicked men*. Judas perhaps thought himself a favourite because he had the sop, like Benjamin at Joseph's table, a mess by himself; thus the prosperity of fools, like a stupifying sop helps to *destroy them*. (2.) That we must not be *outrageous* against those, whom we know to be very *malicious* against us. Christ carved to Judas as kindly as to any at the table, though he knew he was then plotting his death. *If thine enemy hunger, feed him*, that is to do as Christ doth.

Seventhly, Judas himself, instead of being *convinced* hereby of his wickedness, was the more *confirmed* in it, and the warning given him was to him a favour of death unto death; for it follows,

1. The devil hereupon *took possession of him*. Ver. 27. *After the sop Satan entered into him*; not to make him melancholy, or drive him distracted, which was the effect of his possessing some; not to hurry him into the fire, or into the water; happy had it been for him if that had been the worst of it, or if with the swine he had been choked in the sea; but Satan entered into him, to possess him with a prevailing prejudice against Christ and his doctrine, and a contempt of him, as one whose life was of small value, to excite in him a covetous desire of the wages of unrighteousness, and a resolution to stick at nothing for the obtaining of them. But,

1. Was not Satan in him before? How then is it said, that now *Satan entered into him*. Judas was all along a *devil*, John vi. 70. a son of perdition, but now Satan gained a more full possession of him, had a *more abundant entrance* into him. His purpose to betray his Master was now ripened into a fixed resolution; now he returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, Luke xi. 25. Note, 1. Though the devil is in every wicked man that doth his works, Eph. ii. 2. yet sometimes he enters more manifestly and more powerfully than at other times, when he puts them upon some enormous wickedness, which humanity and natural conscience startle at.



at. 2. Betrayers of Christ have much of the devil in them. Christ speaks of the sin of Judas as greater than that of any of his persecutors.

2. How came Satan to enter into him *after the sop*. Perhaps he was presently aware that it was the discovery of him, and it made him *desperate* in his resolutions. Many are made worse by the gifts of Christ's bounty, and are confirmed in their impenitency by that which should have led them to repentance: The *coals of fire heaped upon their heads*, instead of melting them harden them.

2. Christ hereupon dismissed him, and delivered him up to his own heart's lusts. *Then said Jesus unto him, That thou dost, do quickly.* This is not to be understood, as either advising him to his wickedness, or warranting him in it; but either, 1. As *abandoning* him to the conduct and power of Satan. Christ knew that Satan was entered into him, and had peaceable possession, and now he gives him up as hopeless. The various methods Christ had used for his conviction were ineffectual, and therefore what thou dost thou wilt do quickly; if thou art resolved to ruin thy self, go on, and take what comes. Note, When the evil spirit is willingly admitted, the good spirit justly withdraws. Or, 2. As challenging him to do his worst; thou art plotting against me, put thy plot in execution and welcome, the sooner the better, I do not fear thee, I am ready for thee. Note, Our Lord Jesus was very forward to suffer and die for us, and was impatient of delay in the perfecting of his undertaking. Christ speaks of Judas's betraying him as a thing he was now doing, though he was only purposing it. Those who are contriving and designing mischief, are, in God's account, doing mischief.

3. They that were at table understood not what he meant, because they did not hear what he whispered to John. *Ver. 28, 29. No man at table*, either the disciples, or any other of the guests, except John, knew *for what intent* he spake this to him.

1. They did not suspect that Christ said it to Judas as a traitor, because it did not enter into their heads that Judas was such a one, or would prove so. Note, It is an *excusable dulness* in the disciples of Christ, not to be *quick-sighted* in their censures. Most are ready enough to say, when they hear harsh things spoken in general, now *such a one* is meant, and now *such a one*; but Christ's disciples were so well taught to *love one another*, that they could not easily learn to suspect one another, *charity thinks no evil*.

2. They therefore took it for granted, that he said it to him as a *trustee*, or *treasurer* of the household, giving him orders for the laying out of some money. And their surmises in this case *discover* to us for what uses and purposes our Lord Jesus commonly directed payments to be made out of that little stock he had; and so teach us how to honour the Lord with our substance. They concluded something was to be laid out, either,

(1.) In works of piety, *Buy those things that we have need of against the feast.* Though he *borrowed* a room to eat the passover in, yet he *bought in* provision for it. That is to be reckoned well bestowed, which is laid out upon *those things we have need of* for the maintenance of God's ordinances among us; and we have the less reason to grudge that expence now, because our gospel worship is nothing so chargeable as the legal worship was.

(2.) Or in works of charity, *that he should give something to the poor.* By this it appears, (1.) That our Lord Jesus, though he lived upon alms himself (*Luke viii. 3.*) yet gave alms to the poor; a little out of a little. Though he might very well be excused, not only because he was poor himself, but because he did so much good other-ways, curing so many *gratis*; yet, to set us an example, he gave for the *relief of the poor* out of that which he had for the *subsistence of his family*; see *Eph. iv. 28.* (2.) That the time of a religious feast was thought a proper time for works of charity. When he celebrated the passover he ordered something for the poor: When we experience God's bounty to us, that should make us bountiful to the poor.

4. Judas hereupon sets himself vigorously to pursue his design against him. He *went away*. Notice is taken,

1. Of his speedy departure, *he went out presently* and quitted the house. (1.) For fear of being more plainly discovered to the company, which if he were, he expected they would all fall upon him, and be the death of him, or at least of his project. (2.) He went out as one weary of Christ's company, and sick of the society of his apostles: Christ needed not to expel him, he expelled himself. Note, Withdrawing from the communion of the faithful, is commonly the first *overt-act* of a backslider, and the beginning of an apostasy. (3.) He *went out* to prosecute his design, to look for those with whom he was to make his bargain, and to settle the agreement with them. Now Satan had got into him, he hurried him on with precipitation, lest he should see his error and repent of it.

2. Of the time of his departure, *It was night.*  
1. Though it was *night*, an unreasonable time for business, yet Satan having entered into him, he made no difficulty of the coldness and darkness of the night. This should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardise in the service of Christ, that the devil's servants are so earnest and venturous in his service.

2. Because it was *night*, and that gave him advantage of privacy and concealment. He was not willing to be *seen* treating with the chief priests, and therefore chose the dark night, as the fittest time  
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for such works of darkness. They whose deeds are evil, love darkness rather than light; see *Job xxiv. 13, &c.*

31. ¶ Therefore when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 32. If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. 33. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you. 34. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

This and what follows, to the end of *chap. xiv.* was Christ's table-talk with his disciples. When supper was done Judas went out; but what did the Master and his disciples do, whom he left sitting at table? They applied themselves to profitable discourse, to teach us, as much as we can, to make conversation with our friends at table serviceable to religion. Christ begins this discourse, and the more forward we are humbly to promote that communication which is good, and to the use of edifying, the more like we are to Jesus Christ. Those especially that by their place, reputation, and gifts, *command the company*, to whom *men give ear*, ought to use the interest they have in other respects, as an opportunity of doing them good.

Now our Lord Jesus discourseth with them, (and probably discourseth much more largely than is here recorded)

First, Concerning the great mystery of his own *death* and *sufferings*, which they were as yet so much in the dark about, that they could not persuade themselves to expect the thing itself, much less did they understand the meaning of it, and therefore Christ gives them such instructions concerning it as made the offence of the cross to cease. Christ did not begin this discourse till Judas was gone out, for he was a false brother: The presence of wicked people is often a hindrance to good discourse. When Judas was gone out, Christ said, *Now is the Son of man glorified*; now Judas is discovered and discarded, that was a spot in their love-feast, and a scandal to their family, *Now is the Son of man glorified*. Note, Christ is glorified by the purifying of Christian societies: corruptions in his church are a reproach to him; the purging out of those corruptions rolls away the reproach. Or rather, now Judas was gone to set the wheels a-going, in order to his being put to death, and the thing was likely to be effected shortly, *Now is the Son of man glorified*, meaning, *now he is crucified*.

1. Here is something which Christ instructs them in concerning his sufferings, that was very *comforting*. Three things,

(1.) That he should himself be *glorified in them*. Now the *Son of man* is to be exposed to the greatest ignominy and disgrace, to be despitefully used to the last degree, and dishonoured both by the cowardise of his friends, and the insolence of his enemies; yet *now is he glorified*:

For, 1. Now he is to obtain a *glorious victory* over Satan and all the powers of darkness, to spoil them, and triumph over them. He is now *girding on the harness*, to take the field against those adversaries of God and man, with as great an assurance as if he had *put it off*.

2. Now he is to work out a *glorious deliverance* for his people; by his death to reconcile them to God, and bring in an everlasting righteousness and happiness for them; to shed that blood which is to be an inexhaustible fountain of joys and blessings to all believers.

3. Now he is to give a *glorious example* of self-denial and patience under the cross, courage and contempt of the world, zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men, as will make him to be for ever *admired* and had in *honour*. Christ had been glorified in many miracles he had wrought, and yet he speaks of his being glorified *now* in his sufferings, as if that were more than all his other glories in his humbled state.

(2.) That God the Father should be *glorified in them*. The sufferings of Christ were, (1.) The *satisfaction of God's justice*, and so God was glorified in them. Reparation was thereby made with great advantage for the wrong done him in his honour by the sin of man: The ends of the law were abundantly answered, and the glory of his government effectually asserted and maintained. (2.) They were the manifestation of his holiness and mercy. The attributes of God shine bright in redemption and providence, but much more in the work of creation; see *1 Cor. i. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 6.* God is *love*, and herein he hath commended his love.

(3.) That he should himself be greatly *glorified after them*, in consideration of God's being greatly glorified by them, *ver. 32.* Observe how he enlarges upon it.

1. He is sure that *God will glorify him*; and those whom God glorifies are glorious indeed. Hell and earth set themselves to *vilify* Christ, but God resolved to glorify him, and he did it. He glorified him in his sufferings by the amazing signs and wonders, both in heaven and earth which attended them, and extorted even from his crucifiers an acknowledgment that he was the *Son of God*. But especially after his sufferings he *glorified him*, when he set him at his own right hand, gave him a *name above every name*.



2. That he will glorify him *in himself*, ἐν ἑαυτῷ. Either, (1.) In *Christ himself*: He will glorify him in his own person, and not only in his kingdom among men. This supposeth his speedy resurrection. A common person may be honoured after his death in his memory or posterity, but Christ was honoured in *himself*. Or, (2.) In God himself. God will glorify him *with himself*, as it is explained, *John xvii. 5. He shall sit down with the Father upon his throne*, Rev. iii. 21. This is true glory.

3. That he will glorify him *straightway*. He looked upon the joy and glory set before him, not only as *great*, but as *near*; and his sorrows and sufferings short, and soon over. Good services done to earthly princes often remain long unrewarded, but Christ had his preferments presently. It was but forty hours (or not so much) from his death to his resurrection, and forty days from thence to his ascension, so that it might well be said he was *straightway glorified*, *Psal. xvi. 10.*

4. All this in consideration of God's being glorified in and by his sufferings. *Seeing God is glorified in him*, and receives honour from his sufferings, God shall in like manner glorify him in himself, and give honour to him. Note, 1. In the exaltation of Christ there was a regard had to his humiliation, and a reward given for it. *Because he humbled himself therefore God highly exalted him.* If the Father be so great a gainer in his glory by the death of Christ, we may be sure the Son shall be no loser in his. See the covenant between them, *Isa. liii. 12.* 2. Those who mind the *business of glorifying God*, no doubt shall have the happiness of being *glorified with him*.

2. Here is something that Christ instructs them in concerning his sufferings, which was *awakening*, for as yet they were slow of heart to understand it. *Ver. 32. Little children, yet a little while I am with you*, &c.

Two things Christ here suggests to quicken his disciples to improve their present opportunities. Two serious words.

1. That his *stay in this world*, to be with them here, they would find to be very short. *Little children.* This compellation doth not speak so much their *weakness*, as his *tenderness* and compassion; he speaks to them with the affection of a father, now he is about to leave them, and to leave blessings with them. Know this then, that *yet a little while I am with you*. Whether we understand it of the time betwixt his death, or betwixt his ascension, it comes much to one; he had but a little time to spend with them, and therefore,

(1.) Let them *improve* the advantage they now had. If they had any good question to ask, if they would have any advice, instruction, or comfort, let them *speak quickly*, for *yet a little while I am with you*. We must make the best of the helps we have for our souls while we have them, because we shall not have them long; they will be taken from us, or we from them.

(2.) Let them *not dote upon* his bodily presence, as if their happiness and comfort were bound up in that; no, they must think of living without it; not be always little children, but go alone without their nurses. Ways and means are appointed but *for a little while*, and are not to be rested in, but pressed through to our rest, which they have a reference to.

2. That their *following him* to the *other world* to be with him there, they would find to be *very difficult*. What he had said to the Jews, *chap. vii. 34.* he saith to his disciples; for they have need to be quickened by the same considerations that are propounded for the convincing and awakening of sinners. Christ tells them here, (1.) That when he was gone they would find a miss of him. *Ye shall seek me*, i. e. ye shall wish ye had me again with you. We are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them. Though the presence of the Comforter yielded them real and effectual relief in straits and difficulties, yet it was not such a *sensible* satisfaction as his bodily presence would have been to those who had been used to that. But observe, Christ said to the Jews, ye shall seek me and *not find me*; but to the disciples he only saith, *Ye shall seek me*, intimating, that though they should not find his bodily presence, no more than the Jews, yet they should find that which was *tantamount*, and should not seek in vain. When they sought his body in the sepulchre, though they did not find it, yet they sought to good purpose. 2. That whither he went they *could not come*, which suggests to them *high thoughts* of him, who was going to an invisible, inaccessible world, to dwell in that light which none *can approach unto*; and also *low thoughts* of themselves, and serious thoughts of their future state. Christ tells them they *could not follow him*, as Joshua told the people they *could not serve the Lord*, only to quicken them to so much the more diligence and care. They could not *follow him* to his *cross*, for they had not courage and resolution; it appeared they could not, when they all forsook him and fled. Nor could they follow him to his *crown*, for they had not sufficiency of their own, nor was their work and warfare yet *finished*.

Secondly, He discourseth with them concerning the great duty of brotherly love, *ver. 34, 35. Ye shall love one another.* Judas was now *gone out*, and had proved himself a false brother, but they must not therefore harbour such jealousies and suspicions one of another, as would be the bane of love; though there was one Judas among them, yet they were not all Judas's. Now the enmity of the Jews against Christ and his followers, was swelling to the height, and they must expect such treatment as their Master had, it concerned them by brotherly love to strengthen one another's hands.

Three arguments for mutual love are here urged.

1. The *command of their Master*, *ver. 34. A new commandment I give unto you.* He not only *commends* it as amiable and pleasant; not only counsels it as excellent and profitable, but *commands* it, and makes it one of the fundamental laws of his kingdom; it goes a-breast with the command of believing in Christ, *1 John iii. 23. 1 Pet. i. 23.* It is the command of our *ruler*, who has right to give law to us; it is the command of our *Redeemer*, who gives us this law in order to the *curing* of our spiritual diseases, and the preparing of us for our eternal bliss. It is a *new commandment*; that is, (1.) It is a *renewed* commandment; it was a commandment *from the beginning*, *1 John ii. 7.* as old as the law of nature; it was the second great commandment of the law of Moses, yet, because it is also one of the great commandments of the New Testament of Christ, the new lawgiver, it is called a *new commandment*; it is like an old book in a new edition corrected and enlarged. This commandment had been so corrupted by the traditions of the Jewish church, that when Christ *revives* it, and sets it in a true light, it might well be called a *new commandment*. Laws of revenge and retaliation were so much in vogue, and self-love had so much the ascendant, that the law of brotherly love was forgotten as obsolete, and out of date; so that as it came from Christ new, it was new to the people. (2.) It is an *excellent* command, as a *new song* is an excellent song that has an uncommon gratefulness in it. (3.) It is an everlasting command; so strangely new as to be always so; as the *new covenant* which shall never decay, *Heb. viii. 13.* it shall be new to eternity when faith and hope are antiquated. (4.) As Christ gives it, it is *new*. Before it was, thou shalt love *thy neighbour*; now it is, ye shall love *one another*; it is pressed in a more winning way, when it is thus pressed as *mutual duty* owing to one another.

2. The *example of their Saviour*, is another argument for brotherly love. *As I have loved you.* This is it that makes it a *new commandment*; that this rule and reason of love, *as I have loved you*, is perfectly new, and such as had been hid from ages and generations. Understand this, 1. Of all the instances of Christ's love to his disciples, which they had already experienced during the time he went in and out among them. He spoke kindly to them, concerned himself heartily for them, and for their welfare; instructed, counselled, and comforted them; prayed with them, and for them; vindicated them when they were accused, took their part when they were run down, and publicly owned them to be dearer to him than his *mother, or sister, or brother*: He reproveth them for what was amiss, and yet compassionately bore with their failings, excused them, made the best of them, and passed by many an oversight. Thus he *had* loved them, and just now washes their feet; and thus they *must* love one another, and love *to the end*. Or, 2. It may be understood of the special instance of love to all his disciples he was now about to give, in laying down his life for them. *Greater love hath no man than this*, *John xv. 13.* Has he thus loved us all? justly may he expect that we should be loving to one another. Not that we are capable of doing any thing of the *same nature* for each other, *Psal. xlix. 7.* but we must love one another in some respects after the *same manner*; we must set this before us as our copy, and take directions from it. Our love to one another must be free and ready, laborious and expensive, constant and persevering; it must be love *to the souls* one of another. We must also love one another from *this motive*, and upon this consideration, *because Christ has loved us*. See *Rom. xv. 1, 2. Eph. v. 2, 25. Phil. iii. 1—5.*

3. The *reputation of their profession*. *Ver. 35. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another.* Observe, we must have *love*; not only shew love, but have it in the root and habit of it; and *have it* when there is not any present occasion to shew it; have it *ready*. Hereby it will appear that you are indeed my followers, by following me in this. Note, Brotherly love is the badge of Christ's disciples. By this *he* knows them, by this they may know themselves, *1 John iii. 14.* and by this *others* may know them. This is the livery of his family, the distinguishing character of his disciples; this he would have them *noted for*, as that wherein they excelled all others, their loving one another. This was it that their Master was famous for; all that ever heard of him, have heard of his love, his great love; and therefore if you see any people more than ordinary loving one to another, say certainly these are the followers of Christ, they have been with Jesus.

Now by this it appears, (1.) That the heart of Christ was very much upon it, that his disciples should *love one another*; in this they must be *singular*; whereas the way of the world is to be *every one for himself*, they should be hearty for one another. He doth not say, *By this shall men know* that you are my disciples, if ye *work miracles*, for a worker of miracles is but a cypher without charity, *1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2.* But if ye *love one another* from a principle of self-denial, and gratitude to Christ, this Christ would have to be the *proprium* of his religion, the principle note of the true church. (2.) That it is the true honour of Christ's disciples to excel in brotherly love: Nothing will be more effectual than this to recommend them to the esteem and respects of others. See what a powerful attractive it was, *Acts ii. 46, 47.* Tertullian speaks of it as the glory of the primitive church, that the Christians were known by their *lovingness* to one another. Their adversaries took notice of it,



it, and said, *See how these Christians love one another*, Apol. cap. 39. (3.) That if the followers of Christ do not love one another, they not only cast an unjust reproach upon their profession, but give just cause to suspect their own sincerity. *O Jesus! are these thy Christians?* These passionate, malicious, spiteful, ill-natured people; *Is this thy son's coat?* When our brethren stand in need of help from us, and we have an opportunity of being *serviceable to them*, when they differ in opinion and practice from us, or are any ways rivals with, or provoking to us, and so we have an occasion to condescend and forgive; in such cases as this it will be known whether we have this badge of Christ's disciples.

36. ¶ Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. 37. Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. 38. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

In these verses we have,

First, Peter's curiosity, and the check given to that.

1. Peter's question was bold and blunt, *ver. 36. Lord, whither goest thou?* Referring to what Christ had said, *ver. 33. Whither I go ye cannot come.* The practical instructions Christ had given them concerning brotherly love he overlooks, and asks no questions upon them, but fastens upon that, concerning which Christ purposely kept them in the dark. Note, It is a common fault among us, to be more inquisitive concerning things secret, which belong to God only, than concerning things revealed, which belong to us and our children; more desirous to have our curiosity gratified than our consciences directed; to know what is done in heaven, than what we may do to get thither. It is easy to observe it in the converse of Christians, how soon a discourse of that which is plain and edifying is dropped, and no more said to it, the subject is exhausted; while a matter of doubtful disputation runs into an endless strife of words.

2. Christ's answer was instructive. He did not gratify him with any particular account of the world he was going to, nor ever foretold his glories and joys so distinctly as he did his sufferings; but said what he had said before, *ver. 33. let that suffice, Thou canst not follow me now, but shalt follow me hereafter.*

1. We may understand it of his following him to the cross. Thou hast not yet strength enough of faith and resolution to drink of my cup; and it appeared so by his cowardise, when Christ was suffering. For this reason, when Christ was seized, he provided for the safety of his disciples, *Let these go their way*, because they could not follow him now. Christ considers the frame of his disciples, and will not cut out for them that work and hardship which they are not as yet fit for; the day shall be as the strength is. Peter, though designed for martyrdom, cannot follow Christ now, not being come to his full growth, but he shall follow him hereafter; he shall be crucified at last like his Master. Let him not think, that because he escapes suffering now he shall never suffer: From our missing the cross once, we must not infer that we shall never meet it; we may be reserved for greater trials than we have yet known.

2. We may understand it of his following him to the crown. Christ was now going to his glory, and Peter was very desirous to go with him; no, saith Christ, *Thou canst not follow me now*, thou art not yet ripe for heaven, nor hast thou finished thy work on earth. The forerunner must first enter to prepare a place for thee, but thou shalt follow me afterwards, after thou hast fought the good fight, and at the time appointed. Note, Believers must not expect to be glorified as soon as they are effectually called, for there is a wilderness between the Red-sea and Canaan.

Secondly, Peter's confidence, and the check given to that.

1. Peter makes a daring protestation of his constancy. He is not content to be left behind, but asks, *Lord, Why cannot I follow thee now?* Dost thou question my sincerity and resolution, I promise thee, if there be occasion, *I will lay down my life for thy sake.* Some think Peter had a conceit, as the Jews had in the like case, chap. vii. 35. that Christ was designing a journey, or voyage into some remote country, and he declared his resolution to go along with him wherever he went; but having heard his Master so often speak of his own sufferings, surely he could not understand him any otherwise but of his going away by death, and he resolves, as Thomas did, he will go and die with him; and better die with him, than live without him. See here, (1.) What an affectionate love Peter had to our Lord Jesus; *I will lay down my life for thy sake*, and I can do no more. I believe Peter spoke as he thought, and though he was inconsiderate, he was not insincere in this resolution. Note, Christ should be dearer to us than our own lives, which therefore when we are called to it we should be willing to lay down for his sake, Acts xx. 24. (2.) How ill he took it to have it questioned, intimated in that exhortation, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now*, dost thou suspect my fidelity to thee? 1 Sam. xxix. 8. Note, It is with regret that true love hears its own sincerity arraigned, as

John xxi. 17. Christ had indeed said, that one of them was a devil, but he was discovered and gone out, and therefore Peter thinks he may speak with the more assurance of his own sincerity, *Lord, I am resolved I will never leave thee, and therefore why cannot I follow thee?* We are apt to think we can do any thing, and take it amiss to be told, that this and the other we cannot do, whereas without Christ we can do nothing.

2. Christ gives him a surprising prediction of his inconstancy, *ver. 38.* Jesus Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and has many ways of discovering those to themselves whom he loves, and he will hide pride from.

1. He upbraids Peter with his confidence. *Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?* Methinks he seems to have said this with a smile. Peter, thy promises are too large, too lavish to be relied on; thou dost not consider with what reluctance and struggle a life is laid down, and what a hard task it is to die; not so soon done as said. Christ hereby puts Peter upon second thoughts, not that he might retract his resolution, or recede from it, but that he might insert into it that necessary proviso, *Lord, thy grace enabling me*, I will lay down my life for thy sake. Wilt thou undertake to die for me? What, thou that tremblest to walk upon the water to me? What thou that when sufferings were spoken of, criedst out, *Be it far from thee, Lord!* It was an easy thing to leave thy boats and nets to follow me, but not so easy to lay down thy life. His Master himself struggled when it came to that, and the disciple is not greater than his Lord. Note, It is good for us to shame ourselves out of our presumptuous confidence in ourselves. Shall a bruised reed set up for a pillar? or a sickly child undertake to be a champion? What a fool am I to talk so big?

2. He plainly foretels his cowardise in the critical hour. To stop the mouth of his boasting, lest Peter should say it again, *yea, Master, that I will*, Christ solemnly asserts it with, *Verily, verily I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.* He doth not say as afterwards, *this night*, for it seems to have been two nights before the passover; but shortly thou wilt have denied me thrice, within the space of one night; nay within so short a space, as between the first and last crowing of the cock; *The cock shall not crow*, i. e. shall not have crowed his crowing out till thou hast again denied me, and that for fear of suffering. The crowing of the cock is mentioned, (1.) To intimate that the trial in which he would miscarry thus, should be in the night, which was an improbable circumstance, but Christ's foretelling it was an instance of his infallible foresight. (2.) Because the crowing of the cock was to be the occasion of his repentance, which of itself would not have been, if Christ had not put this into the prediction. Christ not only foresaw that Judas would betray him, though he only in heart designed it; but he foresaw that Peter would deny him, though he did not design it, but the contrary. He knows not only the wickedness of sinners, but the weakness of saints.

Christ told Peter, (1.) That he would deny him, would renounce and abjure him: Thou wilt not only not follow me still, but be ashamed to own that ever thou didst follow me. (2.) That he would do this not once only by a hasty slip of his tongue, but after he had paused, would repeat it a second and third time; and it proved too true. We commonly give it as a reason, why the prophecies of scripture are expressed darkly and figuratively, because if they did plainly describe the event, the accomplishment would thereby either be defeated, or necessitated by a fatality inconsistent with human liberty; and yet this plain and express prophecy of Peter's denying Christ, did neither; nor did in the least make Christ accessory to Peter's sin. But we may well imagine what a mortification it was to Peter's confidence of his own courage, to be told this, and to be told it in such a manner, as that he durst not contradict it, else he would have said as Hazael, *What! is thy servant a dog?* This could not but fill him with confusion. Note, The most secure are commonly the least safe; and those most shamefully betray their own weakness, that most confidently presume upon their own strength, 1 Cor. x. 12.

## C H A P. XIV.

This chapter is a continuation of Christ's discourse with his disciples after supper; when he had convicted and discarded Judas, he set himself to comfort the rest, who were full of sorrow upon what he had said of leaving them, and a great many good words, and comfortable words, he here speaks to them. The discourse is interlocutory, as Peter in the foregoing chapter; so Thomas, and Philip, and Judas, in this interposed their thoughts upon what he said according to the liberty he was pleased to allow them. Free conferences are as instructive as solemn speeches, and more so. The general scope of this chapter is in the first verse; it is designed to keep trouble from their hearts; now in order to that, they must believe: And let them consider, (1.) Heaven as their everlasting rest, *ver. 2, 3.* (2.) Christ himself as their way, *ver. 4—11.* (3.) The great powers they shall be clothed with by the prevalency of their prayers, *ver. 12—14.* (4.) The coming of another Comforter, *ver. 15—17.* (5.) The fellowship and communion that should be between him and them after his departure, *ver. 18—24.* (6.) The instructions which



the Holy Ghost should give them, ver. 25, 26. (7.) The peace Christ bequeathed to them, ver. 27. (8.) Christ's own cheerfulness in his departure, ver. 28—31. And this which he said to them, is designed for the comfort of all his faithful followers.

**L**ET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. 3. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

In these verses we have,

First, A general caution which Christ gives to his disciples, against trouble of heart, ver. 1. *Let not your heart be troubled.* They now began to be troubled, were entering into this temptation. Now here see,

1. How Christ took notice of it. Perhaps it was legible in their looks; it was said, chap. xiii. 22. *they looked one upon another* with anxiety and concern, and Christ looked upon them all, and observed it; however it was intelligible to the Lord Jesus, who is acquainted with all our secret undiscovered sorrows, with the wound that bleeds inwardly; he knows not only how we are afflicted, but how we stand affected under our afflictions, and how near they lie to our hearts; he takes cognizance of all the trouble which his people are at any time in danger of being overwhelmed with; he knows our souls in adversity.

Many things concurred to trouble the disciples now,

1. Christ had newly told them of the unkindnesses he should receive from some of them, and this troubled them all; Peter, no doubt, looked very sorrowful upon what Christ said to him, and all the rest were sorry for him, and for themselves too, not knowing whose turn it should be to be told next of some ill thing or other they should do. As to this Christ comforts them; though a godly jealousy over ourselves, is of great use to keep us humble and watchful, yet it must not prevail to the disquieting of our spirits, and the damping of our holy joy.

2. He had newly told them of his own departure from them; that he should not only go away, but go away in a cloud of sufferings. They must shortly hear him loaded with reproaches, and those will be as a sword in their bones; must see him barbarously abused, and put to death, and this also will be a sword piercing through their own souls, for they had loved him, and chosen him, and left all to follow him. When we now look upon Christ pierced, we cannot but mourn, and be in bitterness, though we see the glorious issue and fruit of it, much more grievous must the sight be to them who could then look no further.

If Christ depart from them, (1.) They will think themselves shamefully disappointed; for they looked that this had been he that should have delivered Israel, and should have set up his kingdom in secular power and glory, and in expectation of that, had lost all to follow him. Now, if he leave the world in the same circumstances of meanness and poverty in which he had lived, and worse, they are quite defeated. (2.) They will think themselves sadly deserted, and exposed. They knew by experience what little presence of mind they had in difficult emergencies, that they could count upon nothing but being ruined and run down if they part with their Master. Now, in reference to all these, *Let not your hearts be troubled.* Here are three words, upon any of which the emphasis may significantly be laid.

(1.) Upon the word *troubled*, *μη ταραχισθε*: be not so troubled as to be put into a hurry and confusion, like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest. He doth not say, Let not your hearts be sensible of the griefs, or sad because of them, but be not ruffled and discomposed, be not cast down and disquieted, Psal. xlii. 5.

(2.) Upon the word *heart*; though the nation and city be troubled, though your little family and flock be troubled, yet let not your heart be troubled. Keep possession of your own souls, when you can keep possession of nothing else. The heart is the main fort, whatever you do, keep trouble from that, keep that with all diligence. The spirit must sustain the infirmity, therefore see that that be not wounded.

(3.) Upon the word *your*; you that are my disciples and followers, my redeemed, chosen, sanctified ones, however others are overwhelmed with the sorrows of this present time, be not you so, for you know better things; let the sinners in Zion tremble, but let the sons of Zion be joyful in their King. Herein Christ's disciples should do more than others, should keep their minds quiet, when every thing else is unquiet.

2. The remedy he prescribes against this trouble of mind, which he saw ready to prevail over them; in general, *believe*, *πιστευετε*. (1.) Some read it in both parts imperatively, *believe in God*, and his perfections and providence, *believe also in me*, and my mediation. Build with confidence upon the great acknowledged principles of natural religion; that there is a God, that he is most holy, wise, powerful, and good; that he is the governour of the world, and has the sovereign disposal of all events; and comfort yourselves likewise with the peculiar doctrines of that holy religion which I have taught you. But, (2.) We read the former as an acknowledgment, that they did believe in God, for which he commends them; but if you would

effectually provide against a stormy day, believe also in me; through Christ we are brought into covenant with God, and become interested in his favour and promise, which otherwise, as sinners, we must despair of, and the remembrance of God would have been our trouble; but believing in Christ as the Mediator between God and man, our belief in God becomes comfortable; and this is the will of God, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father, by believing in the Son, as they believe in the Father; and those that rightly believe in God, will believe in Jesus Christ, whom he has made known to them. And believing God through Jesus Christ, is an excellent means of keeping trouble from the heart. The joys of faith are the best remedies against the griefs of sense; it is a remedy with a promise annexed to it; *the just shall live by faith*; a remedy with a probatum est annexed to it, *I had fainted unless I had believed.*

Secondly, Here is a particular direction to act faith upon the promise of eternal life, ver. 2, 3. He had directed them to trust to God, and to trust him; but what must they trust God and Christ for? Trust them for a happiness to come, when this body, and this world shall be no more; and for a happiness to last as long as the immortal soul, and the eternal world shall last. Now this is proposed as a sovereign cordial under all the troubles of this present time, to which there is that in the happiness of heaven which is admirably adapted and accommodated. All the saints have encouraged themselves with this in their greatest extremities, *That heaven would make amends for all.*

Let us see how this is suggested here:

1. Believe and consider that really there is such a happiness, *In my Father's house there are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you.*

(1.) See under what notion the happiness of heaven is here represented; as mansions, many mansions in Christ's Father's house. 1. Heaven is a house, not a tent or tabernacle; it is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2. It is a Father's house; my Father's house; and his Father is our Father, to whom he was now ascending, so that in right of their elder brother all true believers shall be welcome to that happiness as to their home. It is his house, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, dwells in light, and inhabits eternity. 3. There are mansions there. That is, (1.) Distinct dwellings, an apartment for each; perhaps there is an allusion to the priests' chambers that were about the temple. In heaven there are accommodations for particular saints; though all shall be swallowed up in God, yet our individuation shall not be lost there; every Israelite had his lot in Canaan, and every elder a seat, Rev. iv. 4. (2.) Durable dwellings. *Μόναι*, from *μεινω*, *maneo*, abiding places. The house itself is lasting; our estate in it is not for a term of years but a perpetuity. Here we are as in an inn, in heaven we shall gain a settlement. The disciples had quitted their houses to attend Christ, who had not where to lay his head, but the mansions in heaven will make them amends. 4. There are many mansions, for there are many sons to be brought to glory, and he exactly knows their number; nor will he be straitened for room by the coming of more company than he expects. He had told Peter that he should follow him, chap. xiii. 36. but let not the rest be discouraged, in heaven there are mansions for them all. *Rehoboth*, Gen. xxvi. 22.

(2.) See what assurance we have of the reality of the happiness itself, and the sincerity of the proposal of it to us; *If it were not so, I would have told you.* If you had deceived yourselves when you quitted your livelihoods, and ventured your lives for me in prospect of a happiness, future and unseen, I would soon have undeceived you. The assurance is built, (1.) Upon the veracity of his word. It is implied, if there were not such a happiness valuable and attainable, I would not have told you that there was. (2.) Upon the sincerity of his affection to them. As he is true, and would not impose upon them himself, so he is kind, and would not suffer them to be imposed upon. If either there were no such mansions, or none designed for them, who had left all to follow him, he would have given them timely notice of the mistake, that they might have made an honourable retreat to the world again, and have made the best hand they could of it. Note, Christ's good will to us is a great encouragement to our hope in him. He loves us too well, and means us too well, to disappoint the expectations of his own raising; or to leave those to be of all men most miserable, who have been of him most observant.

2. Believe and consider, that the design of Christ's going away was to prepare a place in heaven for his disciples. You are grieved to think of my going away, whereas I go on your errand, as the forerunner, *I am to enter for you.* He went to prepare a place for us; that is, 1. To take possession for us, as our advocate or attorney, and so to secure our title as indefeasible. Livery of seisin was given to Christ, for the use and behoof of all that should believe on him. 2. To make provision for us as our friend and father. The happiness of heaven, though prepared before the foundation of the world, yet must be further fitted up for man in his fallen state. It consisting much in the presence of Christ there, it was therefore necessary he should go before, to enter into that glory which his disciples were to share in: Heaven would be an unready place for a Christian if Christ were not there. He went to prepare a table for them, to prepare thrones for them, Luke xxii. 30. Thus he designed to speak the fitness of heaven's happiness for the saints, for whom it is prepared.

3. Believe



3. Believe and consider, that therefore he would certainly come again in due time, to fetch them to that blessed place which he was now going to possess for himself, and prepare for them, *ver. 3. If I go and prepare a place for you, if that be the errand of my journey, you may be sure, when every thing is ready, I will come again, and receive you to my self, so that you shall follow me hereafter, that where I am, there ye may be also.* Now these are comfortable words indeed:

1. That Jesus Christ *will come again*, *ἔρχομαι, I do come*; intimating the certainty of it, that he *will come*, and that he is daily coming. We say we are coming, when we are busy in preparing for our coming, and so he is; all he doth has a reference and tendency to his second coming. Note; The belief of Christ's second coming, which he has given us the assurance of, is an excellent preservative against trouble of heart, *Phil. iv. 5. Jam. v. 8.*

2. That he *will come again*, to receive all his faithful followers to himself. He sends for them privately at death, and gathers them one by one; but they are to make their publick entry in solemn state all together at the last day, and then Christ himself *will come* to receive them, to conduct them, out of the abundance of his care, and to welcome them, out of the abundance of his love; he will hereby testify the utmost respects and endearments imaginable: The coming of Christ is, in order to our *gathering together unto him*, *2 Thess. ii. 1.*

3. *That where he is, there they shall be also.* This speaks the same that many other scriptures speak, that the quintessence of heaven's happiness is being with Christ *there*, *John xvii. 24. Phil. i. 23. 1 Thess. iv. 17.* Christ speaks of his being *there* as now present, *that where I am; where I am to be shortly, where I am to be eternally; there ye shall be shortly, there ye shall be eternally:* Not only *there*, in the same place; but *there*, in the same state: Not only spectators of his glory, as the three disciples on the mount, but sharers in it.

4. That this may be inferred from his *going to prepare a place for us*, for his preparations *shall not be in vain*; he will not build and furnish lodgings, and let them stand empty; he will be the finisher of that which he is the author of; if he have *prepared the place for us*, he will *prepare us for it*, and, in due time, put us in possession of it: As the resurrection of Christ is the assurance of our resurrection, so his ascension, victory, and glory, is an assurance of ours.

4. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? 6. Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. 7. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father? 10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of my self: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doth the works. 11. Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works sake.

Christ having set the happiness of heaven before them as the end, here shews them himself as *the way* to it, and tells them, they were better acquainted both with the end they were to aim at, and with *the way* they were to walk in, than they thought they were: *Ye know, i. e. 1. Ye may know*; it is none of the *secret things* which *belong not to you*, but one of the *things revealed*; you need not *ascend into heaven*, or *go down into the deep*, for *the word is nigh you*, *Rom. x. 6, 8.* level to you. 2. *Ye do know*; ye know that which is the home, and which is *the way*, though, perhaps, not as the home, and as *the way*: You have been told it, and cannot but know, if you would recollect and consider it. Note, Jesus Christ is willing to make the best of his peoples knowledge, though they are weak and defective in it: He knows the good that is in them, better than they do themselves, and is certain they have that knowledge, and faith, and love, which they themselves are not sensible of, or not certain of.

This word of Christ gave occasion to two of his disciples to address themselves to him, and he answers them both.

First, Thomas enquired concerning *the way*, *ver. 5.* without any apology for contradicting his Master; he said, *Lord, we know not whither thou goest*, to what place, or what state, and *how can we know the way*, in which we must follow thee? We can neither guess at it, nor enquire it out, but must still be at a loss. Christ's testimony concerning their knowledge made them more sensible of their ignorance, and more inquisitive after further light. Thomas here shews more modesty than Peter, who thought he could follow Christ now: Peter was there more solicitous to know *whither*

*Christ went*; Thomas here, though he complains that he did not know that, yet seems most solicitous to know *the way*. Now, 1. His confession of his ignorance was commendable enough, if good men be in the dark, and know but in part, yet they are willing to own their defects; but, 2. The cause of his ignorance was culpable: They *knew not whither* Christ went, because they dreamed of a temporal kingdom, in external pomp and power, and doted upon that, notwithstanding what he had said again and again to the contrary: Hence it was, that, when Christ spoke of going away, and their following him, their fancy run upon his going to some remarkable city or other, Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or Capernaum, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, as David to Hebron, *there to be anointed king*, and *to restore the kingdom to Israel*, and which way this place lay, where these castles in the air were to be built, east, west, north, or south, they could not tell, and therefore *knew not the way*. Thus still we think ourselves more in the dark, than we need to be, concerning the future state of the church, because we expect its worldly prosperity, whereas it is spiritual advancement that the promise points at. Had Thomas understood, as he might have done, that Christ was going to the invisible world, the world of spirits, to which spiritual things only have a reference, he would not have said, *Lord, we do not know the way*.

Now to this complaint of their ignorance, which included a desire to be taught, Christ gives a full answer, *ver. 6, 7.* Thomas had enquired, both *whither he went*, and *what was the way*, and Christ answers both those enquiries, and makes good what he had said, that they would have needed no answer, if they had understood themselves aright; for they knew him, and he was *the way*; they knew *the Father*, and he was the end; and therefore, *whither I go ye know, and the way ye know*: Believe in God as the end, and in me as *the way*, *ver. 1.* and you do all you should do.

1. He speaks of himself as *the way*, *ver. 6.* Dost thou not know the way? *I am the way*, and I only, for *no man comes to the Father, but by me*. Great things Christ here saith of himself, shewing us,

(1.) The nature of his mediation; he is *the way, the truth, and the life*.

Let us consider these first distinctly:

1. Christ is *the way, the high-way* spoken of, *Isa. xxxv. 8.* Christ was his own way, for by his own blood he entered into the holy place, *Heb. ix. 12.* and he is our way, for we enter by him: By his doctrine and example he teacheth us our duty, by his merit and intercession he procures us our happiness, and so he is *the way*. In him God and man meet, and are brought together. We could not get to *the tree of life* in the way of innocency, but Christ is another way to it: By Christ, as *the way*, an intercourse is settled, and kept up, between heaven and earth; the angels of God ascend and descend; our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us, by him; this is *the way that leads to rest, the good old way*: The disciples followed him, and Christ tells them they followed the road, and, while they continued following him, they would never be out of their way.

2. He is *the truth*: 1. As *truth* is opposed to figure and shadow, Christ is the substance of all the Old Testament types, which are therefore said to be *figures of the true*, *Heb. ix. 24.* Christ is *the true manna*, *John vi. 32.* *the true tabernacle*, *Heb. viii. 2.* 2. As *truth* is opposed to falsehood and error; the doctrine of Christ is true doctrine; when we enquire for *truth*, we need learn no more; but *the truth as it is in Jesus*. 3. As *truth* is opposed to fallacy and deceit; he is true to all that trust in him, as true as *truth* itself, *2 Cor. i. 20.*

3. He is *the life*; for we are *alive unto God*, only in and through Jesus Christ, *Rom. vi. 11.* Christ formed in us, is that to our souls, which our souls are to our bodies: Christ is *the resurrection, and the life*.

Let us also consider these jointly, and with reference to each other. Christ is *the way, the truth, and the life*; that is, 1. He is the beginning, the middle, and the end: In him we must set out, go on, and finish: As *the truth*, he is the guide of our way; as *the life*, he is the end of it. 2. He is *the true and living way*, *Heb. x. 20.* there is *truth and life* in it, as well as at the end of it. 3. He is *the true way to life*, the only *true way*; other ways may seem right, but the end of them is the way of death.

(2.) The necessity of his mediation; *no man cometh to the Father but by me*. Fallen man must come to God as a Judge, but cannot come to him as a Father, otherwise than by Christ, as Mediator. We cannot perform the duty of coming to God; by repentance, and the acts of worship, without the Spirit and grace of Christ, nor obtain the happiness of coming to God as our Father, without his merit and righteousness; he is *the High-priest of our profession*, our Advocate.

2. He speaks of his Father as the end, *ver. 7.* *If ye had known me aright, ye should, or would, have known my Father also; and from henceforth, by the glory you have seen in me, and the doctrine ye have heard from me, ye know him, and have seen him.* Here is;

(1.) A tacit rebuke to them for their dulness and carelessness in acquainting themselves with Jesus Christ, though they had been his constant followers and associates: *If ye had known me*. They knew him, and yet did not know him so well as they might, and should



should have known him: They know him to be the Christ, but did not follow on to know God in him. Christ had said to the Jews, chap. viii. 19. *If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also*; and here the same to his disciples; for it is hard to say, which is more strange, the wilful ignorance of those that are enemies to the light, or the defects and mistakes of the children of light, that have had such opportunities of knowledge. *If they had known Christ aright, they would have known that his kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world*; that he came down from heaven, and therefore must return to heaven; and then they would have known his Father also, would have known whither he designed to go; when he said, *I go to the Father*, to a glory in the other world; not in this. If we knew Christianity better, we should better know natural religion.

(2.) A favourable intimation that he was well satisfied concerning their sincerity, notwithstanding the weakness of their understanding; and from henceforth, from my giving you this hint, which will serve as a key to all the instructions I have given you hitherto, let me tell you, *ye know him, and have seen him*, inasmuch as *ye know me, and have seen me*; for in the face of Christ we see the glory of God, as we see a father in his son that resembles him. Christ tells his disciples, they were not so ignorant as they seemed to be; for though little children, yet they had known the Father, 1 John ii. 13. Note, Many of the disciples of Christ have more knowledge and more grace than they think they have; and Christ takes notice of, and is well pleased with, that good in them which they themselves are not aware of; for they that know God, do not presently know that they know him, 1 John ii. 3.

Secondly, Philip enquired concerning the Father, ver. 8. and Christ answered him, ver. 9, 10, 11. where observe,

1. Philip's request for some extraordinary discovery of the Father: He was not so forward to speak as some others of them were, and yet, from an earnest desire of further light, he cries out, *Shew us the Father*. Philip listened to what Christ said to Thomas, and fastened upon the last words, *Ye have seen him*: Nay, saith Philip, that is it we want, that is it we would have, *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us*.

(1.) This supposeth an earnest desire of acquaintance with God as a Father; the petition is, *Shew us the Father*; give us to know him in that relation to us; and this he begs, not for himself only, but for the rest of the disciples; the plea is, *It sufficeth us*: He not only professeth it himself, but will pass his word for his fellow-disciples: Grant us but one sight of the Father, and we have enough. Janfenius saith, though Philip did not mean it, yet the holy Ghost, by his mouth, designed here to teach us, that the satisfaction and happiness of a soul consists in the vision and fruition of God, Psal. xvi. 1. xvii. 5. In the knowledge of God the understanding rests, and is at the top of its ambition; in the knowledge of God, as our Father, the soul is satisfied; a sight of the Father is a heaven upon earth, fills us with joy unspeakable.

(2.) As Philip speaks it here, it intimates, that he was not satisfied with such a discovery of the Father, as Christ thought fit to give them, but he would prescribe to him, and press upon him something further, and no less than some visible appearance of the glory of God, like that to Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 22. and to the elders of Israel, Exod. xxiv. 10, 11. Let us see the Father with our bodily eyes, as we see thee, and it sufficeth us; we will trouble thee with no more questions, *Whither thou goest*. And so it discovers, not only the weakness of his faith, but his ignorance of the gospel way of manifesting the Father, which is spiritual, and not sensible: Such a sight of God he thinks would suffice them, and yet those who did thus see him were not sufficed, but soon corrupted themselves, and made a graven image. Christ's institutions have provided better for the confirmation of our faith, than our own inventions would.

2. Christ's reply, referring him to the discoveries already made of the Father, ver. 9, 10, 11.

(1.) He refers him to what he had seen, ver. 9. He upbraids him with his ignorance and inadvertency: *Have I been so long time with you?* now above three years intimately conversant with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip? Now, he that has seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, *Shew us the Father*? Wilt thou ask for that which thou hast already? Now here,

1. He reproves him for two things:

(1.) For not improving his acquaintance with Christ, as he might have done, to a clear and distinct knowledge of him: *Hast thou not known me Philip?* whom thou hast followed so long, and conversed with so much? Philip, the first day he came to him, declared that he knew him to be the Messiah, John i. 45. and yet to this day did not know the Father in him. Many that have good knowledge in the scripture, and divine things, fall short of the attainments justly expected from them, for want of compounding the ideas they have, and going on to perfection. Many know Christ, who yet do not know what they might know of him, nor see what they should see in him.

That which aggravated Philip's dulness was, that he had had so long an opportunity of improvement: *I have been so long time with thee*. Note, The longer we enjoy the means of knowledge and grace, the more inexcusable we are, if we be found defective in

grace and knowledge: Christ expects our proficiency should be in some measure according to our standing, and that we should not be always babes. Let us thus reason with ourselves; have I been so long a hearer of sermons, a student in the scripture, a scholar in the school of Christ, and yet so weak in the knowledge of Christ, and so unskilful in the word of righteousness?

(2.) He reproves him for his infirmity in the prayer made, *Shew us the Father*. Note, Herein appears much of the weakness of Christ's disciples, that they know not what to pray for as they ought, Rom. viii. 26. but often ask amiss, Jam. iv. 3. for that which either is not promised, or is already bestowed in the sense of the promise, as here.

2. He instructs him, and gives him a maxim, which not only in general magnifies Christ, and leads us to the knowledge of God in him, but justifies what Christ had said, ver. 7. *Ye know the Father, and have seen him*; and answers what Philip had asked, *Shew us the Father*? Why, saith Christ, the difficulty is soon over, for he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. 1. All that saw Christ in the flesh, might have seen the Father in him, if Satan had not blinded their minds, and kept them from a sight of Christ, as the image of God, 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2. All that saw Christ by faith, did see the Father in him, though they were not suddenly aware that they did so. In the light of Christ's doctrine, they saw God as the Father of lights; in the miracles, they saw God as the God of power, the finger of God. The holiness of God shone in the spotless purity of Christ's life, and his grace in all the acts of grace he did.

(2.) He refers him to what he had reason to believe, ver. 10, 11. *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?* and therefore in seeing me, thou hast seen the Father. Hast thou not believed this? If not, take my word for it, and believe it now.

1. See here what it is which we are to believe; that *I am in the Father, and the Father in me*; that is, as he had said, chap. x. 30. *I and my Father are one*. He speaks of the Father and himself as two persons, and yet so one as never any two were, or can be. In knowing Christ as God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, and as being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, we know the Father; and in seeing him thus we see the Father: In Christ we behold more of the glory of God, than Moses did at mount Horeb.

2. See here what inducements we have to believe this, and they are two: We must believe it,

(1.) For his words sake: *The words that I speak to you, I speak not of my self*: See John vii. 16. *My doctrine is not mine*. What he said seemed to them careless as the word of man, speaking his own thoughts at his own pleasure; but really it was the wisdom of God that indited it, and the will of God that enforced it: He spake not of himself only, but the mind of God, according to the eternal counsels.

(2.) For his works sake: *The Father that dwelleth in me, he doth them*; and therefore believe me for their sakes. Observe, 1. The Father is said to dwell in him, ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων, he abideth in me, by the inseparable union of the divine and human nature; never had God such a temple to dwell in on earth, as the body of the Lord Jesus, John ii. 21. here was the true Shechinah, of which that in the tabernacle was but a type: *The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily*, Col. ii. 9. The Father so dwells in Christ, as that in him he may be found, as a man where he dwells: *Seek ye the Lord, seek him in Christ, and he will be found*, for in him he dwells. 2. He doth the works. Many works of power, and works of mercy, Christ did, and the Father did them in him; and the work of redemption in general was God's own work. 3. We are bound to believe this, for the very works sake. As we are to believe the being and perfections of God, for the sake of the works of creation, which declare his glory; so we are to believe the revelation of God to man in Jesus Christ, for the sake of the works of the Redeemer; those mighty works, which, by shewing forth themselves (Matt. xiv. 2.) shew forth him, and God in him. Note, Christ's miracles are proofs of his divine mission, not only for the conviction of infidels, but for the confirmation of the faith of his own disciples, John ii. 11.—v. 36.—x. 37.

12. Verily verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

The disciples, as they were full of grief to think of parting with their Master, so they were full of care what would become of themselves when he was gone; while he was with them he was a support to them, kept them in countenance, kept them in heart; but if he leave them, they will be as sheep having no shepherd, an easy prey to those who sought to run them down. Now, to silence these fears, Christ here assures them, that they should be clothed with powers sufficient to bear them out. As Christ had all power, they,



they, in his name, should have great power, both in heaven, and in earth.

1. Great power on earth, ver. 12. *He that believeth on me (as I know you do) the works that I do, shall he do also.* This doth not weaken the argument Christ had taken from his works to prove himself one with the Father, that others should do as great works, but rather strengthens it; for the miracles which the apostles wrought, were wrought in his name, and by faith in him; and this magnifies his power more than any thing, that he not only wrought miracles himself, but gave power to others to do so too. Two things he assures them of:

(1.) That they should be enabled to do such works as he had done, and that they should have a more ample power for the doing of them, than they had had when he first sent them forth, *Matt. x. 8.* Did Christ heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead? so should they. Did he convince and convert sinners, and draw multitudes to him? so should they. Though he should depart, the work should not cease, nor fall to the ground, but should be carried on as vigorously and successfully as ever; and it is still in the doing.

(2.) That they should do greater works than these:

1. In the kingdom of nature: They should work greater miracles. No miracle is little, but some, to our apprehension, seem greater than others. Christ had healed with the hem of his garment, but Peter with his shadow, *Acts v. 15.* Paul by the handkerchief that had touched him, *Acts xix. 12.* Christ wrought miracles for two or three years in one country, but his followers wrought miracles in his name for many ages in divers countries. *Ye shall do greater,* if there were occasion, for the glory of God. The prayer of faith, if at any time it had been necessary, should have removed mountains.

2. In the kingdom of grace: They should obtain greater victories by the gospel, than had been obtained while Christ was upon earth. And the truth is, the captivating of so great a part of the world to Christ, under such outward disadvantages, was the miracle of all. I think, this refers especially to the gift of tongues, which was the immediate effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, which was a constant miracle upon the mind, in which words are framed, and which was made to serve so glorious an intention, as that of spreading the gospel to all nations in their own language: This was a greater sign to them which believed not (*1 Cor. xiv. 22.*) and more powerful for their conviction, than any other miracle whatsoever.

The reason Christ gives for this is, *because I go unto my Father.* 1. *Because I go,* it will be requisite you should have such a power, lest the work suffer damage by my absence. 2. *Because I go to the Father,* I shall be in a capacity to furnish you with such a power, for I go to the Father to send the Comforter, from whom you shall receive power, *Acts i. 8.* The wonderful works which they did in Christ's name, were part of the glories of his exalted state, when he ascended on high, *Eph. iv. 8.*

2. Great power in heaven: *Whatever ye shall ask, that will I do,* ver. 13, 14. as Israel, that was a prince with God. Therefore you shall do such mighty works, because you have such an interest in me, and I in my Father. Observe,

1. In what way they were to keep up communion with him, and fetch in power from him, when he was gone to the Father; by prayer. When dear friends are to be removed at a distance from each other, they provide for the settling of a correspondence; thus when Christ was going to his Father, he tells his disciples how they might write to him upon every occasion, and send it by a safe and ready way of conveyance, without danger of miscarrying, or lying by the way; let me hear from you by prayer, the prayer of faith, and you shall hear from me by the Spirit: This was the old way of intercourse with heaven; ever since men began to call upon the name of the Lord; but Christ, by his death, has laid it more open, and it is still open to us. Here is,

(1.) Humility prescribed: *Ye shall ask.* Though they had quitted all for Christ, they could demand nothing of him as a debt, but must ask it as an alms, must be humble supplicants, beg or starve, beg or perish.

(2.) Liberty allowed. Ask any thing, any thing that is good and proper for you, any thing, provided you know what you ask, you may ask; you may ask for assistance in your work; for a mouth and wisdom, for preservation out of the hands of your enemies; for power to work miracles when there is occasion, for the success of the ministry in the conversion of souls; ask to be informed, directed, vindicated: Occasions vary, but they shall be welcome to the throne of grace upon every occasion.

2. In what name they were to present their petitions, *ask in my name.* To ask in Christ's name, is, (1.) To plead his merit and intercession, and to depend upon that plea. The Old Testament saints had an eye to this when they prayed for the Lord's sake, *Dan. ix. 17.* and for the sake of the anointed, *Psal. lxxxiv. 9.* but Christ's mediation is brought to a clearer light by the gospel, and so we are enabled more expressly to ask in his name. When Christ dictated the Lord's prayer, this was not inserted, because they did not so fully understand this matter as they should afterwards, when the Spirit was poured out: If we ask in our own name, we cannot expect to speed, for being strangers we have no

name in heaven, being sinners we have an ill name there; but Christ's is a good name, well known in heaven, and very precious.

(2.) It is to aim at his glory and honour in our prayers, and to seek that as our highest end in all our prayers.

3. What success they should have in their prayers; what you ask, *that will I do,* ver. 13. And again, ver. 14. *I will do it.* You may be sure I will: not only it shall be done, I will see it done, or give orders for the doing of it, but *I will do it*; for he has not only the interest of an intercessor, but the power of a sovereign prince, who sits at the right hand of God, the hand of action, and has the doing of all in the kingdom of God. By faith in his name we may have what we will for the asking.

4. For what reason their prayers should speed so well; *that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* That is, 1. This they ought to aim at, and have their eye upon in asking. In this all our desires and prayers should meet as in their centre; to this they must all be directed, that God in Christ may be honoured by our services, and in our salvation. *Hallowed be thy name,* is an answered prayer, and is put first, because if the heart be sincere in that, it doth in a manner consecrate all the other petitions. 2. This Christ will aim at in granting, and for the sake of this will do what they ask, that hereby the glory of the Father in the Son might be manifested. The wisdom, power, and goodness of God were magnified in the Redeemer, when by a power derived from him, and exerted in his name, and for his service, his apostles and ministers were enabled to do such great things, both in the proofs of their doctrine, and in the successes of it.

15. If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17. Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Christ not only proposeth such things to them as were the matter of their comfort, but here promiseth to send the Spirit, whose office it should be to be their comforter, to impress those things upon them.

1. He premiseth to this a memorandum of duty: ver. 15, *If ye love me keep my commandments.* Keeping the commandments of Christ is here put for the practice of godliness in general, and for the faithful and diligent discharge of their office as apostles in particular. Now observe, 1. When Christ is comforting them, he bids them keep his commandments; for we must not expect comfort but in the way of duty. The same word (*παρακαλέω*) signifies both to exhort and to comfort. 2. When they were in care what they should do now their Master was leaving them, and what would become of them now, he bids them keep his commandments, and then nothing could come amiss to them. In difficult times our care concerning the events of the day should be swallowed up in a care concerning the duty of the day. 3. When they were shewing their love to Christ by their grieving to think of his departure, and the sorrow which filled their heart, upon the foresight of that, he bids them, if they would shew their love to him, do it not by those weak and feminine passions; but by their conscientious care to perform their trust; and by a universal obedience to his commands; that is better than sacrifice, better than tears. *Lovest thou me? Feed my lambs.* 4. When Christ has given them precious promises, of the answer of their prayers, and the coming of the Comforter, he laid down this as a limitation of the promises, provided you keep my commandments; from a principle of love to me. Christ will not be an advocate for any but those that will be ruled and advised by him as their counsel. Follow the conduct of the Spirit; and you shall have the comfort of the Spirit.

2. He promiseth this great and unspeakable blessing to them, ver. 16; 17.

First, It is promised that they shall have another comforter. This is the great New Testament promise, *Act i. 4.* as that of the Messiah was of the Old Testament; a promise adapted to the present distress of the disciples, who were in sorrow, and needed a comforter. Observe here;

1. The blessing promised: *ἄλλον παρακλητήν.* The word is used only here in these discourses of Christ's, and *1 John ii. 1.* where we translate it an advocate. The Rhemists, and Dr. Hammond, are for retaining the Greek word, *paraclete*; we read *Acts ix. 31.* of the *παρακλησίαι τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος*, the comforter, the holy Ghost, including his whole office as a palaclete.

(1.) You shall have another advocate. The office of the Spirit was to be Christ's advocate with them, and others; to plead his cause, and take care of his concerns on earth; to be vicarius Christi, as one of the ancients calls him; and to be their advocate, with their opposers. When Christ was with them he spoke for them as there was occasion, but now he is leaving them they shall not be run down, the Spirit of the Father shall speak in them, *Matt.*



x. 19, 20. And the cause cannot miscarry that is pleaded by such an advocate.

(2.) You shall have another *master* or *teacher*, another *exhorter*. While they had Christ with them he excited and exhorted them to their duty, but now he is going, he leaves one with them that shall do this as effectually, though silently. Janfenius thinks the most proper word to render it by, is a patron, one that shall both instruct and protect you.

(3.) Another *comforter*. Christ was expected as the consolation of Israel. One of the names of the Messiah among the Jews was *Menahem*, the *comforter*. The Targum calls the days of the Messiah, the years of consolation. Christ comforted his disciples when he was with them, and now he was leaving them in their greatest need, he promiseth them another.

2. The giver of this blessing, *the Father* shall give him, *my Father* and *your Father*; it includes both. The same that gave the Son to be our Saviour, will give his Spirit to be our comforter, pursuant to the same design. The Son is said to send the Comforter, chap. xv. 26. but the Father is the prime agent.

3. How this blessing is procured, by the *intercession* of the Lord Jesus; *I will pray the Father*. He said, ver. 14. *I will do it*; here he saith, *I will pray for it*, to shew not only that he is both God and man, but that he is both King and Priest. As *Priest* he is ordained for men to *make intercession*, as *King* he is authorized by the Father to *execute judgment*. When Christ saith, *I will pray the Father*, it doth not suppose that the Father is unwilling, or must be importuned to it, but only that the gift of the Spirit is a fruit of Christ's mediation, purchased by his merit, and taken out by his intercession.

4. The continuance of this blessing, *That he may abide with you for ever*. That is, 1. *With you*, as long as you live: You shall never know the want of a comforter, nor lament his departure, as you are now lamenting mine. Note, It should support us under the loss of those comforts which were designed us for a time, that there are everlasting consolations provided for us. It was not expedient Christ should be with them *for ever*, for they who were designed for publick service must not always live a college life, they must disperse, and therefore a comforter that would be with them all, in all places alike, wheresoever dispersed, and howsoever distressed, was alone fit to be with them for ever. 2. *With your successors*, when you are gone, to the end of time; your successors in Christianity, in the ministry. 3. If we take *for ever* in its utmost extent, the promise will be accomplished in those consolations of God which will be the eternal Joy of all the saints; *Pleasures for evermore*.

Secondly, This comforter is the *Spirit of truth*, whom ye know, ver. 16, 17. They might think it impossible to have a comforter equivalent to him who is the *Son of God*; yea, saith Christ, you shall have the Spirit of God, who is equal in power and glory with the Son.

1. The comforter promised is *the Spirit*; one who should do his work in a spiritual way and manner, inwardly and invisibly, by working on mens spirits.

2. He is the *spirit of truth*. He will be true to you, and to his undertaking for you, which he will perform to the utmost. He will *reach you the truth*, will enlighten your minds with the knowledge of it, will strengthen and confirm your belief of it, and will increase your love to it. The Gentiles by their idolatries, and the Jews by their traditions, were led into gross errors and mistakes; but the Spirit of truth shall not only *lead you into all truth*, but others by your ministry. Christ is the truth, and he is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit that he was anointed with.

3. He is one whom *the world cannot receive*—, but ye know him. *Therefore he abideth with you*.

1. The disciples of Christ are here distinguished from the world, for they are chosen and called out of the world that lies in wickedness; they are the children and heirs of another world, not of this.

2. It is the misery of those that are invincibly devoted to the world, that they *cannot receive* the Spirit of truth. The spirit of the world and of God, are spoken of as directly contrary the one to the other, 1 Cor. ii. 12. for where the Spirit of the world has the ascendant, the Spirit of God is excluded. Even the *princes of this world*, though as princes they had advantages of knowledge, yet as princes of this world they laboured under invincible prejudices, so that they knew not the *things of the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. ii. 8.

3. Therefore men *cannot receive the Spirit of truth*, because they *see him not, neither know him*. The comforts of the Spirit are *foolishness to them*, as much as ever the cross of Christ was, and the great things of the gospel, like those of the law, counted as a strange thing. These are judgments far above out of their sight. Speak to the children of this world of the operations of the Spirit, and you are as a barbarian to them.

4. The best knowledge of the Spirit of truth, is that which is got by experience: *Ye know him, for he dwelleth with you*. Christ had dwelt with them, and by their acquaintance with him, they could not but know *the Spirit of truth*. They had themselves been indued with the Spirit in some measure. What enabled them to leave all to follow Christ, and to continue with him in his temptations? What enabled them to preach the gospel, and work mira-

cles, but the *Spirit dwelling in them*? The experiences of the saints are the explications of the promises; paradoxes to others are axioms to them.

5. They that have an experimental acquaintance with the Spirit, have a comfortable assurance of his countenance. He *dwelleth with you*, and *shall be in you*, for the blessed Spirit doth not use to shift his lodging. They that know him, know how to value him, invite him, and bid him welcome, and therefore he shall be in them, as the light in the air, as the sap in the tree, as the soul in the body. Their communion with him shall be intimate, and their union with him inseparable.

6. The gift of the holy Ghost is a peculiar gift, bestowed upon the disciples of Christ in a distinguishing way; them, and not the world; it is to them hidden *manna*, and the *white stone*. No comforts comparable to those which make *no shew*, make *no noise*. This is the favour God bears to his chosen; it is the *heritage of those that fear his name*.

18. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. 19. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more: but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. 20. At that day ye shall know, that *I am* in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self to him. 22. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self unto us, and unto to the world? 23. Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings: and the word which you hear, is not mine, but the Fathers which sent me.

When friends are parting, it is a common request they make to each other, pray let us hear from you as oft as you can; this Christ engaged to his disciples, that *out of sight*, they should not be *out of mind*.

First, He promiseth that he would continue his care of them, ver. 18. *I will not leave you orphans*, or *fatherless*, for though I leave you, yet I leave you this comfort, *I will come to you*. His departure from them was it that grieved them; but it was not so bad as they apprehended, for it was neither *total* nor *final*.

1. Not *total*; though I leave you without my bodily presence, yet I do not leave you without *comfort*. Though children, and left *little*, yet they had received the adoption of sons, and his Father would be their Father, with whom those who otherwise would be fatherless, find mercy. Note, The case of true believers, though sometimes it may be *sorrowful*, yet it is never *comfortless*, because they are never orphans; for God is their Father, who is an *everlasting Father*.

2. Not *final*; *I will come to you*, *ερχομαι*, *I do come*; that is, 1. I will come *speedily* to you at my resurrection, I will not be long away, but will be with you again in a little time. He had often said, *The third day I will rise again*. 2. I will be coming *daily* to you in my Spirit; in the tokens of his love, and visits of his grace, he is still coming. 3. I will come certainly at the end of time, surely I will come quickly to introduce you into the joy of your Lord. Note, The consideration of Christ's coming to us saves us from being comfortless in his removals from us; for if he depart *for a season*, it is *that we may receive him for ever*. Let this moderate our grief, *the Lord is at hand*.

Secondly, He promiseth that they should continue their acquaintance with him, and interest in him, ver. 19, 20. *Yet a little while, and the world sees me no more*, i. e. now I am no more in the world; after his death, *the world saw him no more*, for though he rose to life, he never *shewed himself to all the people*, Acts x. 48. The malignant world thought they had seen enough of him, and *cried, away with him, crucify him*; and so shall their doom be; they shall see him no more. Those only that see Christ with an eye of faith, shall see him *for ever*; the world sees him no more, till his second coming; but his disciples have communion with him in his absence.

1. *Ye see me*, and shall continue to see me, when *the world sees me no more*. They saw him with their bodily eyes after his resurrection, for he shewed himself to them *by many infallible proofs*, Acts i. 3. and then were the disciples glad when they *saw the Lord*. They saw him with an eye of faith after his ascension, sitting at God's right hand; as Lord of all; saw that in him, which the world saw not.

2. *Because I live, ye shall live also*. That which grieved them was that their Master was dying, and they counted upon nothing else but to *die with him*. No, saith Christ, 1. *I live*; this the great God glories in, *I live*, saith the Lord, and Christ saith the same; not only *I shall live*, as he saith of them, but I do live; for he



he has life in himself, and lives for evermore. We are not comfortless, while we know that our Redeemer lives. 2. Therefore ye shall live also. Note, The life of Christians is bound up in the life of Christ; as sure and as long as he lives, they that by faith are united to him shall live also; they shall live spiritually, a divine life in communion with God, this life is hid with Christ; if the head and root live, the members and branches live also. They shall live eternally; their bodies shall rise in the virtue of Christ's resurrection; it will be well with them in the world to come, it cannot but be well with all that are his, *Isa.* xxvi. 19.

3. Ye shall have the assurance of this, *ver.* 20. *At that day*, when I am glorified, when the Spirit is poured out, ye shall know more clearly and certainly than ye do now; that *I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.*

1. These glorious mysteries will be fully known in heaven. *At that day*, when I shall receive you to my self, you shall know perfectly that which now you see through a glass darkly. Now it appears not what we shall be, but then it will appear what we were.

2. They were more fully known after the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles; at that day divine light should shine, and their eyes should see more clearly, their knowledge should greatly advance and encrease then, would become more extensive, and more distinct, and like the blind man's at the the second touch of Christ's hand, who at first only saw men as trees walking.

3. They are known by all that receive the Spirit of truth, to their abundant satisfaction, for in the knowledge of this is founded their fellowship with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. They know, 1. That Christ is in the Father, is one with the Father, by their experience of what he has wrought for them and in them; they find what an admirable consent and harmony there is between Christianity and natural religion, that is grafted into this, and so they know that Christ is in the Father. 2. That Christ is in them; experienced Christians know by the Spirit, that Christ abides in them, *1 John* iii. 24. 3. That they are in Christ, for the relation is mutual, and equally near on both sides, Christ in them, and they in Christ, which speaks an intimate and inseparable union; in the virtue of which it is that because he lives, they shall live also. Note, 1. Union with Christ is the life of believers, and their relation to him, and to God through him, is their felicity. 2. The knowledge of this union is their unspeakable joy and satisfaction; they were now in Christ, and he in them, but he speaks of it as a further act of grace that they should know it, and have the comfort of it. An interest in Christ and the knowledge of it are sometimes separated.

Thirdly, He promiseth that he would love them, and manifest himself to them, *ver.* 21.—24. Where observe,

1. Who they are whom Christ will look upon, and accept as lovers of him; those that have his commandments, and keep them. By this Christ shews that the kind things he here said to his disciples, were intended not for those only that were now his followers, but for all that should believe in him through their word. Here is,

(1.) The duty of those that claim the dignity of being disciples; having Christ's commandments we must keep them; as Christians in name and profession we have Christ's commandments, we have them sounding in our ears, written before our eyes, we have the knowledge of them; but this is not enough, would we approve ourselves Christians indeed, we must keep them. Having them in our heads, we must keep them in our hearts and lives.

(2.) The dignity of those that do the duty of disciples. They are looked upon by Christ to be such as love him. Not those that have the greatest wit, and know how to talk for him, or the greatest estate, to lay out for him, but those that keep his commandments. Note, The surest evidence of our love to Christ is obedience to the laws of Christ. Such is the love of a subject to his sovereign, a dutiful, respectful, obedient love, a conformity to his will, and satisfaction in his wisdom.

2. What returns he will make to them for their love; rich returns; there is no love lost upon Christ.

1. They shall have the Father's love. *He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father.* We could not love God; if he did not first out of his good will to us give us his grace to love him; but there is a love of complacency, promised to those that do love God, *Prov.* viii. 17. He loves them, and lets them know that he loves them, smiles upon them, and embraceth them. God so loves the Son, as to love all those that love him.

2. They shall have Christ's love. *And I will love him*, as God-man, as Mediator; God will love as a Father, and I will love him as a brother, an elder brother. The Creator will love him, and be the felicity of his being; the Redeemer will love him, and be the protector of his well-being. In the nature of God, nothing shines more bright than this, that God is love. And in the undertaking of Christ, nothing appears more glorious than this, that he loved us. Now both these loves are the crown and comfort, the grace and glory which shall be to all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Christ was now leaving his disciples, but

promiseth to continue his love to them; for he not only retains a kindness for believers, though absent, but is doing them kindness whilst absent, for he bears them on his heart, and ever lives interceding for them.

3. They shall have the comfort of that love. *I will manifest my self to him.* Some understand it of Christ's shewing himself alive to his disciples after his resurrection, but it being promised to all that love him, and keep his commandments, it must be construed so as to extend to them; there is a spiritual manifestation of Christ and his love made to all believers; when he enlightens their minds to know his love, and the dimensions of it, *Eph.* iii. 18, 19. enlarges their graces, and draws them into exercise, and thus enlargeth their comforts in himself. When he clears up the evidences of their interest in him, and gives them tokens of his love, experience of his tenderness, and earnestness of his kingdom and glory, then he manifests himself to them; and Christ is manifested to none but those to whom he is pleased to manifest himself.

Now upon occasion of Christ's making this promise,

First, One of the disciples expresseth his wonder and surprize at it, *ver.* 22. Observe,

1. Who it was that said this. *Judas, not Iscariot.* Judah, or Judas was a famous name; the most famous tribe in Israel, was that of Judah; two of Christ's disciples were of that name, one of them was the traitor; the other was the brother of James, *Luke* vi. 16. one of those that were akin to Christ, *Mat.* xiii. 55. He is called Lebbeus and Thaddeus; was the penman of the last of the epistles, which in our translation for distinction sake, we call the epistle of Jude: This was he that spoke here. Observe,

1. There was a very good man, and a very ill man, called by the same name; for names commend us not to God, nor do they make men worse; Judas the apostle was never the worse, nor Judas the apostate ever the better, for being namesakes. But, 2. The evangelist carefully distinguisheth between them; when he speaks of this pious Judas, he adds, *not Iscariot.* Take heed of mistaking; let us not confound the precious and the vile.

2. What he said, *Lord, how is it?* Which speaks either, 1. The weakness of his understanding. So some take it. He expected the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, that it should appear in external pomp and power, such as all the world would wander after: How then, thinks he, should it be confined to us only? *τί γέγονεν*, what is the matter now, that thou wilt not shew thy self openly as is expected, that the Gentiles may come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising? Note, We create difficulties to ourselves, by mistaking the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were of this world. Or, 2. As speaking the strength of his affections, and the humble and thankful sense he had of Christ's distinguishing favours to them. *Lord, how is it?* He is amazed at the condescensions of divine grace, as David, *2 Sam.* vii. 18. what is there in us to deserve so great a favour? Note, 1. Christ's manifesting of himself to his disciples, is done in a distinguishing way; to them, and not unto the world, that sits in darkness; to the base, and not to the mighty and noble; the babes, and not to the wise and prudent. Distinguishing favours are very obliging; considering who are passed by, and who are pitched upon. 2. It is justly marvellous in our eyes; for it is unaccountable, and must be resolved into free and sovereign grace; even so, Father, because it seemed good unto thee.

Secondly, Christ in answer hereunto, explains and confirms what he had said, *ver.* 23, 24. He overlooks what infirmity there was in what Judas spoke, and goes on with his comforts.

1. He further explains the condition of the promise, which was loving him, and keeping his commandments. And as to this he shews what an inseparable connexion there is between love and obedience; love is the root, obedience is the fruit.

(1.) Where a sincere love to Christ is in the heart, there will be obedience; *If a man love me* indeed, that love will be such a commanding, constraining principle in him, that no question he will keep my words. Where there is true love to Christ, there is a value for his favour, a veneration for his authority, and an entire surrender of the whole man to his conduct and government. Where love is, duty follows of course, and is easy and natural, and flows from a principle of gratitude.

(2.) On the other hand, where there is no true love to Christ, there will be no care to obey him. *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings*, *ver.* 24. This comes in here as a discovery of those that do not love Christ; whatever they pretended, certainly those do not love him, that believe not his truths, and obey not his laws; to whom Christ's sayings are but as idle tales, which he heeds not, or hard sayings, which he likes not. It is also a reason why Christ will not manifest himself to the world that doth not love him, because they put this affront upon him, not to keep his sayings, why should Christ be familiar with them that will be strange to him.

2. He further explains the promise, *ver.* 23. *If a man do thus love me, I will manifest my self to him.*

(1.) *My Father will love him*; this he had said before, *ver.* 21. and here repeats it for the confirming of our faith; because it is hard to imagine that the great God should make those the objects



of his love, that had made themselves *vessels of his wrath*. Jude wondered that Christ should *manifest himself to them*; but this answers it, *If my Father love you, why should not. I be free with you?*

(2.) *We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* This explains the meaning of Christ's *manifesting himself to him*, and magnifies the favour. 1. Not only, *I will*, but, *we will, I and the Father*, who, in this, *are one*: See *ver. 9.* The light and love of God is communicated to man in the light and love of the Redeemer, so that wherever Christ is formed, the image of God is stamped. 2. Not only, *I will shew myself to him* at a distance, but, *we will come to him*, to be near him, to be with him; such are the powerful influences of divine graces and comforts upon the souls of those that love Christ in sincerity! 3. Not only, *I will give him a transient view of me*, or make him a short and running visit, but, *we will take up our abode with him*, which notes complacency in him, and constancy to him. God will not only love obedient believers, but he will take a pleasure in loving them, will rest in love to them, *Zeph. iii. 17.* He will be with them as at his home.

3. He gives a good reason both to bind us to observe the condition, and encourage us to depend upon the promise, *ver. 24.* *The word which you hear is not mine, but his that sent me.* To this purpose he had often said, *John vii. 16.—viii. 28.—xii. 44.* And here it comes in very pertinently; 1. The stress of duty is laid upon the *precept of Christ* as our rule, and justly, for that word of Christ which we are to keep is the Father's word, and his will the Father's will. 2. The stress of our *comfort* is laid upon the *promise of Christ*. But forasmuch as in dependence upon that promise, we must *deny ourselves*, and *take up our cross*, and quit all, it concerns us to enquire, whether the security be sufficient for us to venture our all upon, and this satisfies us it is; that the promise is not Christ's bare word, but the Father's which sent him; which therefore we may rely upon.

25. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26. But the Comforter, which is the holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Two things Christ here comforts his disciples with.

First, That they should be under the *tuition of his Spirit*, *ver. 25, 26.* Where we may observe,

1. The reflexion Christ would have them make upon the instructions he had given them; *these things have I spoken unto you*, referring to all the good lessons he had taught them, since they entered themselves into his school; *being yet present with you.* This intimates, 1. That what he had said he did not retract, or unsay, but ratify it, and stand to it. What he had spoken, he had spoken, and would abide by it. 2. That he had improved the opportunity of his bodily presence with them to the utmost; as long as I have been yet present with them, you know I have lost no time. Note, When our teachers are about to be removed from us, we should call to mind what they have spoken, *being yet present with us.*

2. The encouragement given them to expect another teacher, and that Christ would find out a way of speaking to them, after his departure from them, *ver. 26.* He had told them before, that the Father would give them *this other Comforter*, *ver. 16.* And here he returns to speak of it again; for as the promise of the Messiah had been, so the promise of the Spirit now was the consolation of Israel. Two things he here tells them further, concerning the sending of the holy Ghost.

1. *On whose account* he should be sent, the Father will send him *in my name*; i. e. for my sake, at my special instance and request; or, as my agent and representative. He came in his Father's name as his ambassador: The Spirit comes in his name as resident in his absence to carry on his undertaking, and to ripen things for his second coming. Hence he is called the Spirit of Christ, for he pleads his cause, and doth his work.

2. *On what errand* he should be sent; two things he shall do.

1. He shall *teach you all things*; as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Christ was a Teacher to his disciples; if he leave them now they have made so little proficiency, what will become of them? Why, the Spirit shall teach them, shall be their standing tutor. He shall teach them all things necessary for them, either to learn themselves, or to teach others. For they that would teach the things of God, must first themselves be *taught of God*; this is the Spirit's work. See *Isa. lix. 21.*

2. He shall *bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* Many a good lesson Christ had taught them, which they had forgot, and which would be to seek when they had occasion for it; many things they did not retain the remembrance of, because they did not rightly understand the meaning of; the Spirit

shall not teach them a new gospel, but bring to their minds that which they had been taught, by leading them into the understanding of it. The apostles were all of them to preach, and some of them to write the things that Jesus did and taught, to transmit them to distant nations and future ages; now if they had been left to themselves, herein some needful things might have been forgotten, others misrepresented, through the treachery of their memories, therefore the Spirit is promised to enable them truly to relate and record what Christ *said unto them.* And to all the saints the Spirit of grace is given to be a remembrancer, and to him by faith and prayer we should commit the keeping of what we hear and know.

Secondly, That they should be under the influence of his peace, *ver. 27.* *Peace I leave with you.* When Christ was about to leave the world, he *made his will*; his soul he committed to his Father, his body he bequeathed to Joseph to be decently interred, his clothes fell to the soldiers, his mother he left to the care of John; but what should he leave to his poor disciples, that had left all for him? silver and gold he had none, but he left them that which was infinitely better, *his peace.* *I leave you*, but *I leave my peace* with you. I not only give you a title to it, but put you in possession of it. He did not part in anger, but *in love*; for this was his farewell, *peace I leave with you*, as a dying father leaves portions to his children; and this is a *worthy portion.* Observe;

1. The legacy that is here bequeathed. *Peace, my peace.* *Peace* is put for *all good*, and Christ has left us all the needful good, all that is really and truly good, all the purchased, promised good. Peace is put for reconciliation and love; the peace bequeathed is peace with God, peace with one another; peace *in our own bosoms*, that seems to be especially meant; a tranquillity of mind arising from a sense of our justification before God. It is the counterpart of our pardons, and the composure of our minds. This Christ calls his peace, for he is himself our peace, *Eph. ii. 14.* It is the peace he purchased for us, and preached to us, and which the angels congratulated at his birth, *Luke ii. 14.*

2. To whom this legacy is bequeathed; to you, my disciples and followers, that will be exposed to trouble, and have need of peace; to you that are the sons of peace, and are qualified to receive it. This legacy was left to them as the representatives of the church, to them and their successors, to them and all true Christians in all ages.

3. In what manner it is left; not *as the world giveth, give I unto you.* That is, 1. I do not compliment with you, with *peace be unto you*; no, it is not a mere formality, but a real blessing. 2. The peace I give is of such a nature, as that the smiles of the world cannot give it, nor the frowns of the world take it away. Or, 3. The gifts I give *to you*, are not such as *this world* gives to its children and votaries, that it is kind to. The world's gifts concern only the body and time; Christ's gifts enrich the soul for eternity; the world gives lying vanities, and that which will cheat us, Christ gives substantial blessings, which will never fail us. The world gives and takes, Christ gives a good part that shall *never be taken away.* 4. The *peace* which Christ gives is infinitely more valuable than that which the world gives. The world's peace begins in ignorance, consists with sin, and ends in endless troubles; Christ's peace begins in grace, consists with no allowed sin, and ends at length in everlasting peace. As is the difference between a killing lethargy and a reviving refreshing sleep, such is the difference between Christ's peace and the world's.

4. What use they should make of it, *Let not their heart be troubled*, for any evils past or present, *neither let it be afraid* of any evil to come. Note, They that are interested in the covenant of grace, and entitled to the peace which Christ gives, ought not to yield to overwhelming griefs and fears. This comes in here as the conclusion of the whole matter; he had said, *ver. 1.* *Let not your heart be troubled*, and here he repeats it as that which he had now given sufficient reason for.

28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. 29. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe. 30. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do: Arise, let us go hence.

Christ here gives his disciples another reason, why their hearts should not be troubled for his going away; and that is, because his heart was not. And here he tells them what it was that enabled him to endure the cross, and despise the shame, that they might *look unto him*, and *run with patience.* He comforted himself,

First,



First, That though he went away, he should *come again*; *ye have heard how I have said*, and now I say it again, *I go away, and come again*. Note, What we have heard of the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning his second coming, we have need to be told will again and again. When we are under the power of any transport of passion, grief, or fear, or care, we forget that Christ come again. See *Phil. iv. 5*. Christ encouraged himself with this in his sufferings and death, that he should *come again*, and the same should comfort us in our departure at death; *we go away to come again*; the leave we take of our friends at that parting, is only a good night, not a final farewell. See *1 Thess. iv. 13, 14*.

Secondly, That he *went to his Father*. *If ye loved me*, as by your sorrow you say you do, *ye would rejoice* instead of mourning, because though I leave you, yet I said, *I go unto the Father*, not only mine, but yours, which will be my advancement and your advantage, for *my Father is greater than I*. Observe here,

1. It is matter of joy to Christ's disciples, that he is gone *to the Father*, to take possession for orphans, and make intercession for transgressors. His departure had a bright side as well as a dark side. Therefore he sent this message after his resurrection, *John xx. 17*. *I ascend to my Father and your Father*, as most comfortable.

2. The reason of this is, because *the Father is greater than he*, which if it be a proper proof of that for which it is alledged, as no doubt it is, must be understood thus, that his state with his Father would be much more excellent and glorious than his present state; his returning to his Father (so Dr. Hammond) would be the advancing of him to a much higher condition, than that which he was now in. Or thus, his going to the Father himself, and bringing all his followers to him there, was the ultimate end of his undertaking, and therefore greater than the means. Thus Christ raiseth the thoughts and expectations of his disciples to something greater than that, which now they thought all their happiness bound up in. The kingdom of the Father, wherein he shall be all in all, will be greater than the mediatorial kingdom.

3. The disciples of Christ should shew that they *love him*, by their rejoicing in the glories of his exaltation, rather than by lamenting the sorrows of his humiliation, and rejoicing that he is gone to his Father, where he would be, and where we shall be shortly with him. Many that love Christ, let their love run out in a wrong chanel; they think if they love him, they must be continually in pain, because of him, whereas they that love him, should *dwell at ease* in him, should *rejoice in Christ Jesus*.

Thirdly, That his going away, compared with the prophecies, which went before of it, would be a means of confirming the faith of his disciples, *ver. 29*. *I have told you before it come to pass*, that I must die, and rise again, and ascend to the Father, and send the Comforter, *that when it is come to pass, ye might believe*. See this reason, *chap. xiii. 19—xvi. 4*. Christ told his disciples of his death, though he knew it would both puzzle them, and grieve them, because it would afterwards redound to the confirmation of their faith, in two things.

1. That he who foretold those things had a divine prescience, and knew before-hand what a day would bring forth. When St. Paul was going to Jerusalem, he *knew not the things that did abide him there*, but Christ did.

2. That the things foretold were according to the divine purpose and designation, not sudden resolves, but the counterparts of an eternal counsel. Let them therefore not be troubled at that which would be for the confirmation of their faith, and so would redound to their real benefit; for the *trial of our faith* is very precious, though it cost us present *heaviness*, through manifold temptations, *1 Pet. i. 6*.

Fourthly, that he was sure of a victory over Satan, with whom he knew he was to have a struggle in his departure, *ver. 30*. *Henceforth I will not talk much with you*, having not much to say, but what may be adjourned to the pouring out of the Spirit. He had a great deal of good talk with them after this, *chap. xv. and xvi.* but in comparison with what he had said, it was not much. His time was now short, and he therefore spoke largely to them now, because the opportunity will soon be over. Note, We should always endeavour to *talk to the purpose*, because, perhaps, we may not have time to talk much. We know not how soon our breath will be stopt, and therefore should be always breathing something that is good. When we come to be sick, and die, perhaps, we may not be capable of talking much to those about us, and therefore what good counsel we have to give them, let us give it when we are in health.

One reason why he would not talk much with them was, because he had now other work to apply himself to; *the prince of this world comes*; he called the devil the *prince of this world*, *chap. xii. 31*. The disciples dreamed of their Master being the Prince of this world, and the *worldly princes* under him. But Christ tells them, that the *prince of this world* was his enemy, and so were the *princes of this world*, that were acted and ruled by him, *1 Cor. ii. 8*. But *he has nothing in me*. Observe here,

1. The prospect Christ had of an approaching conflict, not only with men, but with the powers of darkness. The devil had set upon him with his temptations, *Mat. iv.* had offered him the

*kingdoms of this world*, if he would hold them as tributary to him, with an eye to which, Christ calls him in disdain, *the prince of this world*; then the devil departed from him for a season; but now, faith Christ, I see him rallying again, preparing to make a furious onset, and so to gain that by terrors, which he could not gain by allurements; to frighten from his undertaking, when he could not tice him from it. Note, The foresight of a temptation gives us great advantage in our resistance of it; for, being forewarned, we should be fore-armed: While we are here, we may see Satan continually coming against us, and ought therefore to be always upon our guard.

2. The assurance he had of good success in the conflict; *he had nothing in me, ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔστιν, he has nothing at all*. 1. There was no guilt in Christ to give authority to the *prince of this world* in his terrors: The devil is said to have the *power of death*, *Heb. ii. 14*. the Jews called him the *angel of death*, as an executioner: Now Christ having done no evil, he had no legal power against him, and therefore, though he prevailed to crucify him, he could not prevail to terrify him; though he hurried him to death, yet not to despair. When Satan comes to disquiet us, he has something in us to perplex us with, for we have all sinned; but when he would disturb Christ, he found no occasion against him. 2. There was no corruption in Christ to give advantage to the *prince of this world* in his temptations; he could not crush his undertaking, by drawing him to sin, because there was nothing sinful in him, nothing irregular for his temptations to fasten upon, no tinder for him to strike fire into; such was the spotless purity of his nature, that he was above the possibility of sinning. The more Satan's interest in us is crushed and decays, the more comfortably may we expect sufferings and death.

Fifthly, That his departure was in compliance with, and obedience to, his Father. Satan could not force his life from him, and yet he would die, *that the world may know that I love the Father*, *ver. 31*. We may take this,

1. As confirming what he had often said, that his undertaking as mediator, was a demonstration to the world, 1. Of his compliance with the Father; hereby it appeared that he *loved the Father*. As it was an evidence of his love to man, that he died for his salvation; so it was of his love to God, that he died for his glory, and the accomplishing of his purposes. Let the world know, that between the Father and the Son there is no love lost. *As the Father loved the Son, and gave all things into his hands; so the Son loved the Father, and gave his Spirit into his hand*. 2. Of his obedience to his Father; *As the Father gave me commandment, even so I did the thing commanded, in the manner commanded*. Note, The best evidence of our love to the Father, is our doing as he hath given us commandment. As Christ *loved the Father*, and obeyed him, *even to the death*; so we must love Christ, and obey him. Christ's eye to the Father's commandment, obliging him to suffer and die, bore him up with cheerfulness, and overcame the reluctancies of nature; this took off the offence of the cross, that what he did was by order from the Father; the command of God is sufficient to bear us out in that which is most disputed by others; and therefore should be sufficient to bear us up in that which is most difficult to ourselves: *This is the will of him that made me; that sent me*.

2. As concluding what he had now said, having brought it to this, here he leaves it, *that the world may know that I love the Father*, you shall see how cheerfully I can meet the appointed cross; *Arise, let us go hence*, to the garden, so some; or to Jerusalem. When we talk of troubles at a distance, it is easy to say, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*; but when it comes to the pinch, when an unavoidable cross lies in the way of duty, then to say, *Arise let us go* meet it, instead of going out of our way to miss it, this lets the world know that we love the Father. If this discourse was at the close of the passover supper, it should seem that at these words he rose from table, and retired into the withdrawing room, where he might the more freely carry on the discourse with his disciples in the following chapters, and pray with them. Dr. Goodwin's remark upon this is, that Christ mentioning the great motive of his sufferings, his Father's commandment, was in all haste to go forth to suffer and die, was afraid of slipping the time of Judas's meeting him; *Arise, faith he, let us go hence*; but he looks upon the glass, as it were, sees it not quite out, and therefore sits down again, and preaches another sermon.

Now, (1.) In these words he gives his disciples an encouragement to follow him: He doth not say, I must go; but, *let us go*. He calls them out to no hardships, but what he himself goes before them in, as their leader. They had promised they would not desert him; come, faith he, *let us go* then; *let us see* how you will make the words good.

(2.) He gives them an example, teaching them, at all times, especially in suffering times, to set loose to all things here below, and often to think and speak of leaving them. Though we sit easy, and in the midst of the delights of an agreeable conversation, yet we must not think of being here always; *Arise, let us go hence*. If it were at the close of the paschal and eucharistical supper, it teacheth us, that the solemnities of our communion with God are not to be constant in this world. When we sit down under



Christ's shadow with delight, and say, *It is good to be here; yet we must think of rising and going hence; going down from the mount.*

## C H A P. XV.

*It is generally agreed, that Christ's discourse in this and the next chapter, was in the close of his last supper, the night in which he was betrayed, and it is a continued discourse, not interrupted as that in the foregoing chapter was, and what he chooseth to discourse of, is very pertinent to the present sad occasion of a farewell sermon: Now he was about to leave them, 1. They would be tempted to leave him, and return to Moses again; and therefore he tells them, how necessary it was that they should by faith adhere to him, and abide in him. 2. They would be tempted to grow strange one to another, and therefore he presseth it upon them to love one another, and to keep up that communion when he was gone, which had hitherto been their comfort. 3. They would be tempted to shrink from their apostleship, when they met with hardships, and therefore he prepares them to bear the shock of the world's ill will. There are four words, to which his discourse in this chapter may be reduced: (1.) Fruit, ver. 1, 8. (2.) Love, ver. 9, 17. (3.) Hatred, ver. 18, 25. (4.) The Comforter, ver. 26, 27.*

**I** Am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 4. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you. 8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.

Here Christ discourseth concerning the *fruit, the fruits of the Spirit*, which his disciples were to *bring forth*, under the similitude of a *vine*. Observe here,

First, The doctrine of this similitude; what notion we ought to have of it:

1. That Jesus Christ is *the vine, the true vine*. It is an instance of the humility of Christ, that he is pleased to speak of himself, under low and humble comparisons. He that is *the sun of righteousness*, and *the bright and morning star*, compares himself to a *vine*. The church, which is Christ mystical, is a *vine*, Psalm lxxx. 80: so is Christ, who is the church seminal: Christ and his church are thus set forth.

(1.) He is *the vine*, planted as the vineyard, and not a spontaneous product; planted in the earth; for he is *the Word made flesh*. The vine has an unsightly, unpromising outside; and Christ had *no form, nor comeliness*, Isa. liii. 2. The vine is a spreading plant, and Christ will be known *salvation to the ends of the earth*. The fruit of the vine honours God, and cheers man, *Judg. ix. 13*. so doth the fruit of Christ's mediation; it is *better than gold*, Prov. viii. 19.

(2.) He is *the true vine*, as truth is opposed to pretence and counterfeit; he is really a fruitful plant, a plant of renown: He is not like that wild vine, which deceived those who gathered of it, 2 Kings iv. 39. but a *true vine*. Unfruitful trees are said to lye, *Hab. iii. 13*. but Christ is a *vine* that will not deceive. Whatever excellency there is in any creature, serviceable to man, it is but a shadow of that grace which is in Christ for his peoples good: He is that *true vine* typified by Judah's vine, which enriched him with the blood of the grape, *Gen. xlix. 11*. by Joseph's vine, the branches of which *run over the wall*, *Gen. xlix. 22*. by Israel's vine, under which he *dwelt safely*, 1 Kings iv. 25.

2. That believers are branches of this *vine*, which supposeth that Christ is the root of *the vine*; the root is unseen, and our life is *hid with Christ*; the root bears the tree, *Rom. xi. 18*. diffuseth sap to it, and is all in all to its flourishing and fruitfulness; and in Christ is all supports and supplies. The branches of the vine are many, some on one side of the house or wall, others on the other side, yet, meeting in the root, are all but one *vine*; thus all good Christians, though in place and opinion distant from each other, yet meet in Christ, the centre of their unity. Believers, like the branches of the vine, are weak, and insufficient to stand of themselves, but as they are borne up: See *Ezek. xv. 2*.

3. That the Father is the husbandman, *γεωργός*, the land-worker; though the earth is the Lord's, it yields him no fruit, unless he work it: God has not only a propriety in, but a care of, the vine, and all the branches: He hath planted, and watered, and

gives the increase; for we are God's husbandry, 1 Cor. iii. 9. See *Isa. v. 1, 2, xxvii. 2, 3*. He had an eye upon Christ the root, and upheld him, and made him to flourish out of a dry ground: He has an eye upon all the branches, and prunes them, and watches over them, that nothing hurt them. Never was any husbandman so wise, so watchful, about his vineyard, as God is about his church! which therefore must needs prosper.

Secondly, The duty taught us by this similitude, which is to *bring forth fruit*, and, in order to that, to *abide in Christ*.

(1.) We must be fruitful. From a vine we look for grapes, *Isa. v. 2*. and from a Christian we look for Christianity, that is the fruit, a Christian temper and disposition, a Christian life and conversation, Christian devotions, and Christian designs. We must honour God, and do good, and exemplify the purity and power of the religion we profess, and this is bearing fruit. The disciples here must be fruitful, as Christians, in all the fruits of righteousness, and as apostles in diffusing the favour of that knowledge. To persuade them to this, he urgeth,

1. The doom of the unfruitful, *ver. 2*. they are taken away. (1.) It is here intimated, that there are many who pass for branches in Christ, who yet do not bear fruit. Were they really united to Christ by faith, they would bear fruit; but being only tied to him by the thread of an outward profession, though they seem to be branches, yet will soon be seen to be dry ones; unfruitful professors are unfaithful professors; professors, and no more. It might be read, *Every branch that beareth not fruit in me*, and it comes much to one; for they that do not bear fruit in Christ, and in his Spirit and grace, are as if they bore no fruit at all, *Hos. x. 1*. (2.) It is here threatened, that they shall be taken away, in justice to them, and in kindness to the rest of the branches. From him that has not real union with Christ, and fruit produced thereby, shall be taken away, even that which he seemed to have, *Luke viii. 18*. Some think, this refers primarily to Judas.

2. The promise made to the fruitful; he purgeth them, that they may bring forth more fruit. Note, 1. Further fruitfulness is the blessed reward of former fruitfulness. The first blessing was, *Be fruitful*; and it is still a great blessing. 2. Even fruitful branches, in order to their further fruitfulness, have need of purging, or pruning, *εὐθραπέ*, he taketh away that which is superfluous and luxuriant, which hinders its growth and fruitfulness. The best have that in them which is peccant, *aliquid amputandum*; some notions, passions, or humours, that want to be purged away, which Christ has promised to do by his word, and Spirit, and providence; and these shall be taken off by degrees in the proper season. 3. The purging of fruitful branches, in order to their greater fruitfulness, is the care and work of the great husbandman; for his own glory.

3. The benefit which believers have by the doctrine of Christ, the power of which they should labour to exemplify in a fruitful conversation, *ver. 7*. Now ye are clean.

(1.) Their society was clean, now Judas was expelled by that word of Christ, *What thou doest, do quickly*; and till they were got clear of him, they were not all clean. The word of Christ is a distinguishing word, and separates between the precious and the vile; it will purify the church of the first-born, in the great dividing day.

(2.) They were each of them clean, i. e. sanctified by the truth of Christ, *John xvii. 17*. that faith, by which they received the word of Christ, purified their hearts, *Acts xv. 9*. The Spirit of grace by the word refined them from the dross of the world, and the flesh; and purged out of them the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees; from which, when they saw their inveterate rage and enmity against their Master, they were now pretty well cleansed. Apply it to all believers. The word of Christ is spoken to them; there is a cleansing virtue in that word, as it works grace, and works out corruption; it cleanseth as fire cleanseth the gold from its dross, and as physick cleanseth the body from its disease: And we then evidence that we are cleansed by the word, when we bring forth fruit unto holiness. Perhaps, here is an allusion to the law concerning vineyards in Canaan; the fruit of them was as unclean, and uncircumcised, the three first years after it was planted; and the fourth year it was to be holiness of praise unto the Lord; and then it was clean, *Lev. xix. 23, 24*. The disciples had now been three years under Christ's instruction, and, now ye are clean.

4. The glory that will redound to God by our fruitfulness, with the comfort and honour that will come to ourselves by it, *ver. 8*. If we bear much fruit,

(1.) Herein our Father will be glorified. The fruitfulness of the apostles, as such, in the diligent discharge of their office, would be to the glory of God, in the conversion of souls, and the offering of them up to him, *Rom. xv. 9*. The fruitfulness of all Christians, in a lower and narrower sphere, is to the glory of God. By the eminent good works of Christians, many are brought to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

(2.) So shall we be Christ's disciples indeed, approving ourselves so, and making it to appear that we are really what we call ourselves: So shall we both evidence our discipleship, and adorn it, and be to our Master for a name, and a praise, and a glory; that is, disciples indeed, *Jer. xiii. 11*. So shall we be owned by our Master in the great day, and have the reward of disciples, a share in the joy of our Lord. And the more fruit we bring forth, the more we abound in that which is good, the more he is glorified.

(2) In



(2.) In order to our fruitfulness we must *abide in Christ*, must keep up our union with him by faith, and do all we do in religion in the virtue of that union.

Here is, 1. The duty enjoined, *ver. 4. Abide in me, and I in you.* Note, It is the great concern of all Christ's disciples, constantly to keep up a dependence upon Christ, and communion with him; habitually to adhere to him, and actually to derive from him. Those that are come to Christ, must *abide in him*; *abide in me*, by faith; *and I in you*, by my Spirit: *Abide in me*, and then fear not but I will *abide in you*; for the communion between Christ and believers never fails on his side. We must *abide in Christ's word* by a regard to it, and it in us as a *light to our feet*. We must *abide in Christ's merit* as our righteousness and plea; and it in us as our support and comfort. The knot of *the branch abides in the vine*, and the sap of *the vine abides in the branch*, and so there is a constant communication between them.

2. The necessity of our abiding in Christ, in order to our fruitfulness, *ver. 4, 5. Ye cannot bring forth fruit, except ye abide in me*; but, if ye do, *ye bring forth much fruit*; for, in short, *without me*, or separate from me, *ye can do nothing*. So necessary is it to our comfort and happiness that we be fruitful, that the best argument to engage us to *abide in Christ* is, that otherwise we cannot be fruitful.

(1.) Abiding in Christ is in order to our doing much good: He that is constant in the exercise of faith in Christ, and love to him, that lives upon his promises, and is led by his Spirit, he *bringeth forth much fruit*, is very serviceable to God's glory, and his own account, in the great day. Note, Union with Christ is a noble principle, productive of all good: A life of faith in the Son of God, is incomparably the most excellent life a man can live in this world; it is regular and even, pure and heavenly, it is useful and comfortable, and all that answers the end of life.

(2.) It is necessary to our doing any good: It is not only a means of cultivating and increasing what good there is already in us, but it is the root and spring of all good: *Without me, ye can do nothing*: Not only no great thing, *heal the sick, or raise the dead*, but *nothing*. Note, We have as necessary and constant a dependence upon the grace of the Mediator for all the spiritual and divine life, as we have upon the providence of the Creator for all the actions of the natural life; for, as to both, it is in the divine power *that we live, and move, and have our being*. Abstract from the merit of Christ, we *can do nothing* towards our justification; and from the Spirit of Christ, *nothing* towards our sanctification. *Without Christ we can do nothing* aright, *nothing* that will be fruit pleasing to God, or profitable to ourselves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. We depend upon Christ, not only, as *the vine* upon the wall, for support; but, as *the branch* on the root, for sap.

3. The fatal consequences of forsaking Christ, *ver. 6. If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch.* This is a description of the fearful state of hypocrites, that *are not in Christ*; and of apostates, that *abide not in Christ*.

1. They are *cast forth as dry and withered branches*, which are plucked off because they cumber the tree. It is just they should have no benefit by Christ, who think they have no need of him; and that they, who reject him, should be rejected by him; those that *abide not in Christ*, shall be abandoned by him; they are left to themselves to fall into scandalous sin, and then are justly *cast out* of the communion of the faithful.

2. They are *withered, as a branch* broken off from the tree. They that *abide not in Christ*, though they may flourish a while in a plausible, at least, a passable profession, yet, in a little time, they *wither*, and come to nothing: Their parts and gifts *wither*, their zeal and devotion *wither*, their credit and reputation *wither*, their hopes and comforts *wither*, Job viii. 11, 12, 13. Note, They that bear no fruit, after a while will bear no leaves. *How soon is that fig-tree withered away*, which Christ has cursed!

3. *Men gather them.* Satan's agents and emissaries pick them up, and make an easy prey of them. They that fall off from Christ, presently fall in with sinners; and the sheep that wander from Christ's fold, the devil stands ready to seize them for himself. When the Spirit of the Lord was departed from Saul, an evil spirit possessed him.

4. They *cast them into the fire*, i. e. they are *cast into the fire*; and they who seduce them, and draw them to sin, do, in effect, *cast them* there; for they *make them children of hell*. Fire is the fittest place for *withered branches*, for they are good for nothing else, Ezek. xv. 2.

5. They are *burned*, that follows of course; but it is here added very emphatically, and makes the threatening very terrible; they will not be consumed in a moment, like *thorns under a pot*, Eccl. vii. 6. but, *noted*, they are burning for ever in a fire, which not only cannot be quenched, but will never spend itself. This comes of quitting Christ, this is the end of barren trees. Apostates are *twice dead*, Jude 12. and when it is said, *they are cast into the fire and are burned*, it speaks as if they were twice damned. Some apply *men gathering them*, to the ministry of the angels in the great day, when they shall gather out of Christ's kingdom all things that offend, and shall *bundle the tares for the fire*.

4. The blessed privilege which they have that *abide in Christ*,

*ver. 7. If my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will of my Father, in my name, and it shall be done.*

See here, 1. How our union with Christ is maintained, by the word: *If ye abide in me*, he had said before, *and I in you*; here he explains himself, *and my words abide in you*; for it is in the word that Christ is set before us; and offered to us, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. It is in the word that we receive and embrace him; and so where *the word of Christ dwells richly*, there Christ dwells. If the word be our constant guide and monitor, if it be in us as at home; then we *abide in Christ, and he in us*.

2. How our communion with Christ is maintained, by prayer: *Ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you*: And what can we desire more, than to have what we will for the asking? Note, They that *abide in Christ*, as their hearts delight; shall have; through Christ, their hearts desire. If we have Christ, we shall want nothing that is good for us. Two things are implied in this promise: 1. That if we *abide in Christ*, and his word in us, we will not ask any thing but what is proper to be done for us: The promises abiding in us, lie ready to be turned into prayers; and the prayers so regulated, cannot but speed. 2. That if we *abide in Christ and his word*, we shall have such an interest in God's favour, and Christ's mediation, that we shall have an *answer of peace* to all our prayers.

9. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11. These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. 12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. 16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Christ, who is love itself, is here discoursing concerning love; a fourfold love.

First, Concerning *the Father's love to him*: And concerning this he here tells us,

1. That *the Father* did love him, *ver. 9. As the Father hath loved me.* He loved him as mediator; *This is my beloved Son*: He was *the Son of his love*: He loved him, and gave *all things into his hand*; and yet so *loved the world*, as to deliver him up for us all. When Christ was entering upon his sufferings, he comforted himself with this, that his Father loved him. Those whom God loves as a Father, may despise the hatred of all the world.

2. That he *abode in his Father's love*, *ver. 10.* He continually loved his Father, and was beloved of him. Even then, when he was *made sin, and a curse, for us*; and it pleased the Lord to bruise him; yet he *abode in his Father's love*: See Psalm lxxxix. 33. Because he continued to love his Father, he went cheerfully through his sufferings, and therefore his Father continued to love him.

3. That therefore he *abode in his Father's love*, because he kept his Father's law. *I have kept my Father's commandments*, as mediator, and so *abide in his love*. Hereby he shewed that he continued to love his Father, that he went on, and went through with his undertaking, and therefore the Father continued to love him: His soul *delighted in him*, because he *did not fail, nor was discouraged*, Isa. xlii. 1, 4. We having broken the law of creation, and thereby thrown ourselves out of the love of God, Christ satisfied for us, by obeying the law of redemption, and so he abode in his love, and restored us to it.

Secondly, Concerning his own love to his disciples: Though he leave them, he loves them: And observe here,

1. The pattern of this love: *As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.* A strange expression of the condescending grace of Christ! As the Father loved him, who was most worthy; he loved them, who were most unworthy. The Father loved him as his Son, and he loves them as his children. *The Father gave all things into his hand*, so, with himself, he *freely giveth us all things*. The Father loved him as mediator, as head of the church, and the great trustee of divine grace and favour, which he had not for himself only, but for the benefit of those for whom he was intrusted; and (saith he) I have been a faithful trustee: As the Father has committed his love to me, so I transmit it to you: Therefore the Father was well pleased with him, that he might be well pleased with us in him; and loved him, that in him, as beloved, he might *make us accepted*, Eph. i. 6.



2. The proofs and products of this love, which are four :

(1.) Christ loved his disciples, for he laid down his life for them, *ver. 13. Greater proof of love hath no man to shew than this, to lay down his life for his friend.* And this is the love wherewith *Christ hath loved us*, he is our *ἀντίδοτος*, bail for us, body for body, life for life, though he knew our insolvency, and foresaw how dear the engagement would cost him. Observe here,

1. The extent of the love of the children of men to one another, the highest proof of it is, laying down one's life for a friend to save his life, and, perhaps, there have been some such heroic achievements of love, more than *plucking out one's own eyes*, *Gal. iv. 15.* If *all that a man has he will give for his life*, he that gives that for his friend gives all, and can give no more; this may sometimes be our duty, *1 John iii. 16.* Paul was ambitious of the honour, *Phil. ii. 17.* and *for a good man, some will even dare to die*, *Rom. v. 7.* It is love in the highest degree, which is *strong as death.*

2. The excellency of the love of Christ beyond all other love; he has not only equalled, but exceeded, the most illustrious lovers. Others have laid down their lives, content they should be taken from them, but Christ gave up his; was not merely passive, but made it his own act and deed. The life which others have laid down, has been but of equal value with the life, for which it was laid down, and, perhaps, less valuable; but Christ is infinitely more worth *than ten thousand of us.* Others have thus laid down their lives for their friends, but Christ laid down his for us, *when we were enemies*, *Rom. v. 8.* *Plusquam ferrea aut lapidea corda esse oportet, quæ non emolliet tam incomparabilis divini amoris suavitatis.* Calvin.

(2) Christ loved his disciples, for he took them into a covenant of friendship with himself, *ver. 14, 15.* If ye approve your selves, by your obedience, my disciples indeed, *ye are my friends*, and shall be treated as friends. Note, The followers of Christ are the friends of Christ, and he is graciously pleased to call and count them so: They that do the duty of his servants, are admitted and advanced to the dignity of his friends. David had one servant in his court, and Solomon one in his, that was, in a particular manner, *the king's friend*, *2 Sam. xv. 37.* *1 Kings iv. 5.* But this honour have all Christ's servants. We may, in some particular instances, befriend a stranger; but we espouse all the interests of a friend, and concern ourselves in all his cares; thus Christ takes believers to be his friends, he visits them, and converseth with them, as his friends; bears with them, and makes the best of them; is afflicted in their afflictions, and takes pleasure in their prosperity; he pleads for them in heaven, and takes care of all their interests there. Have friends but one soul? He that is joined to the Lord is *one Spirit*, *1 Cor. vi. 17.* Though they often shew themselves unfriendly, he is a friend that loves at all times.

Observe how endearingly this is expressed here! 1. He will not *call them servants*, though they called him Master, and Lord. They that would be like Christ in humility, must not take a pride in insisting upon all occasions on their authority and superiority, but remember that their servants are their fellow-servants. But, 2. He will *call them his friends*; he will not only love them, but will let them know it; for *in his tongue is the law of kindness.* After his resurrection, he seems to speak with more affectionate tenderness of, and to his disciples, than before: *Go to my brethren*, *John xx. 17.* *Children, have ye any meat?* *John xxi. 5.* But observe, though Christ called *them his friends*, they called themselves *his servants*: Peter, *a servant of Christ*, *2 Pet. i. 1.* and so James, *chap. i. 1.* The more honour Christ puts upon us, the more honour we should study to do him; the higher in his eyes, the lower in our own.

(3.) Christ loved his disciples, for he was very free in communicating his mind to them, *ver. 15.* Henceforth you shall not be kept so much in the dark as you have been, like *servants*, that are only told their present work; but when the Spirit is poured out, you shall know your Master's designs as *friends.* *All things that I have heard of my Father, I have declared unto you.* As to the secret will of God, there are many things which we must be content not to know; but as to the revealed will of God, Jesus Christ has faithfully handed to us what he received of the Father, *John i. 18.* *Matt. xi. 27.* The great things relating to man's redemption, Christ declared to his disciples, that they might declare them to others; they were the men of his counsel, *Matt. xiii. 11.*

(4.) Christ loved his disciples, for he chose and ordained them to be the prime instruments of his glory and honour in the world, *ver. 16.* *I have chosen you, and ordained you.* His love to them appeared,

1. In their election, their election to the apostleship, *John vi. 70.* *I have chosen you twelve.* It did not begin on their side, *Ye have not chosen me*, but I first *chose you.* Why were they admitted to such an intimacy with him, employed in such an embassy for him, and endued with such power from on high? It was not owing to their wisdom and goodness in choosing him for their Master, but to his favour and grace in choosing them for his disciples. It is fit Christ should have the choosing of his own ministers; still he doth it by his providence and Spirit: Though ministers make that holy calling their own choice, Christ's choice is prior to theirs, and directs and determines it. Of all that are *chosen* to grace and glory, it may be said, they *have not chosen* Christ, but he has *chosen* them, *Deut. vii. 7, 8.*

2. In their ordination. *I have ordained you, ἑθινα ὑμᾶς*, I have put you into the ministry, *1 Tim. i. 12.* put you into commission. By this it appeared he took them for his friends, that he crowned their heads with such an honour, and filled their hands with such a trust. It was a mighty confidence he reposed in them, when he made them his ambassadors to negotiate the affairs of his kingdom in this lower world, and the prime ministers of state, in the administration of it.

The treasure of the gospel was committed to them;

(1.) That it might be propagated; that you should go, *ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε*, that you should go as under a yoke or burthen; for the ministry is a work, and you that go about it, must resolve to undergo a great deal. *That you may go* from place to place all the world over, and *bring forth fruit.* They were ordained not to sit still, but to go about, to be diligent in their work, and to lay out themselves unweariedly in doing good. They were ordained not to beat the air, but to be instrumental in God's hand; for the bringing of nations into obedience to Christ, *Rom. i. 13.* Note, Those whom Christ ordains, should and shall be fruitful; should labour, and shall not labour in vain.

(2.) That it might be perpetuated; that *the fruit should remain*; i. e. that the good effect of the labours may continue in the world *from generation to generation*, to the end of time. The church of Christ was not to be a short lived thing, as many of the sects of the philosophers, that were a nine days wonder; it did not *come up in a night*, nor should it *perish in a night*, but be as the days of heaven. The sermons and writings of the apostles are transmitted down to us, and we at this day are built upon that foundation; ever since the Christian church was first founded by the ministry of the apostles and 70 disciples; as one generation of ministers and Christians has passed away, still another has come. By virtue of that great charter, *Mat. xxviii. 19.* Christ has a church in the world, which as our lawyers say of bodies corporate, doth *not die*, but lives in a succession, and thus *their fruit remains* to this day, and shall do while the earth remains.

Lastly, His love to them appeared in the interest they had at the throne of grace; *whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you.* Probably this refers in the first place to the power of working miracles, which the apostles were clothed with, which was to be drawn out by prayer. Whatever gifts are necessary to the furtherance of your labours, whatever help from heaven you have occasion for at any time, it is but *ask and have.* Three things are here hinted to us for our encouragement in prayer, and very encouraging they are. 1. That we have a God to go to, who is a Father; Christ here calls him *the Father*, both mine and yours; and the Spirit in the word and in the heart teacheth us to cry, *Abba, Father.* 2. That we come in a good name. Whatever errand we come upon to the throne of grace, according to God's will, we may with a humble boldness mention Christ's name in it, and plead that we are related to him, and he is concerned for us. 3. That an answer of peace is promised us. What you come for shall be given you. This great promise made to that great duty, keeps up a comfortable and gainful intercourse between heaven and earth.

Thirdly, Concerning the disciples love to Christ, enjoined in consideration of the great love wherewith he had loved them. Three things he exhorts them to,

1. To *continue in his love*, *ver. 9.* continue in your love to me, and in mine to you. Both may be taken in. We must place our happiness in the continuance of Christ's love to us, and make it our business to give continued proofs of our love to Christ, that nothing may *tempt us* to withdraw from him, or *provoke him* to withdraw from us. Note, All that love Christ should continue in their love to him; that is, be always loving him, and taking all occasions to shew it; and love him to the end. The disciples were to go out upon service for Christ, in which they would meet with many troubles; but faith Christ, *continue in my love.* Keep up your love to me, and then all the troubles you meet with will be easy; love made seven years hard service easy to Jacob. Let not the troubles you meet with for Christ's sake, quench your love to Christ, but quicken it rather.

2. To let his joy remain in them, and fill them, *ver. 11.* This he designed in those precepts and promises given them,

(1.) That *his joy might remain in them.* The words are so placed in the original, as that they may be read, either,

1. That *my joy in you may remain.* If they bring forth much fruit, and continue in his love, he will continue to *rejoice in them*, as he had done. Note, Fruitful and faithful disciples are the joy of the Lord Jesus; he *rests in his love* to them, *Zeph. iii. 17.* As there is a transport of joy in heaven in the conversion of sinners, so there is a remaining joy in the perseverance of saints.

2. Or, that *my joy*, i. e. your joy in me *may remain.* It is the will of Christ that his disciples should constantly and continually rejoice in him, *Phil. iv. 4.* The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a *continual feast.* The word of the Lord enduring for ever, the joys that flow from it, and are founded on it, do so too.

(2.) That *their joy might be full.* Not only that you might be full of joy, but that your joy in me, and in my love, may rise higher



higher and higher, till it come to perfection, when you enter into the joy of your Lord. Note, 1. They and they only that have Christ's joy remaining in them, have their joy full; worldly joys are empty, soon surfeit, but never satisfy, it is only Wisdom's joy that will fill the soul, *Psal.* xxxvi. 8. 2. The design of Christ in his word is to fill the joy of his people; see *1 John* i. 4. This and the other he hath said, that our joy might be fuller and fuller, and perfect at last.

3. To evidence their love to him, by keeping his commandments, ver. 10. *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.* That will be an evidence of the fidelity and constancy of your love to me, and then you may be sure of the continuance of my love to you. Observe here, 1. The promise, ye shall abide in my love, as in a dwelling place at home in Christ's love; as in a resting place, at ease in Christ's love; as in a strong hold, safe in it: You shall abide in my love, i. e. you shall have grace and strength to persevere in loving me. If the same hand that first shed abroad the love of Christ in our hearts did not keep us in that love, we should not long abide in it, but, through the love of the world, should go out of love with Christ himself. 2. The condition of the promise; *If ye keep my commandments*; the disciples were to keep Christ's commandments, not only by a constant conformity to themselves, but by a faithful delivery of them to others; they were to keep them as trustees, in whose hands that great depositum was lodged, for they were to teach all things that Christ had commanded, *Mat.* xxviii. 20. This commandment they must keep without spot, *1 Tim.* vi. 14. and thus they must shew that they abide in his love.

To induce them to keep his commandments, he urgeth,

(1.) His own example; *as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.* Christ submitted to the law of mediation, and so preserved the honour and comfort of it, to teach us to submit to the laws of the Mediator, for we cannot otherwise preserve the honour and comfort of our relation to him.

(2.) The necessity of it to their interest in him, ver. 14. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,* and not otherwise. Note, 1. Those only will be accounted Christ's faithful friends, that approve themselves his obedient servants; for they that will not have him to reign over them, shall be treated as his enemies; *idem velle & idem nolle ea demum vera est amicitia.* *Salust.* 2. It is universal obedience to Christ, that is the only acceptable obedience; to obey him in every thing that he commands us, not excepting, much less excepting against any command.

Fourthly, Concerning the disciples love one to another, enjoined as an evidence of their love to Christ, and a grateful return for his love to them. We must keep his commandments, and this is his commandment, that we love one another, ver. 12. and again, ver. 17. No one duty of religion is more frequently inculcated, or more pathetically urged upon us by our Lord Jesus, than that of mutual love, and for good reason.

1. It is here recommended by Christ's pattern, ver. 12. *As I have loved you.* Christ's love to us should direct and engage our love to each other; in that manner, and from that motive, we should love one another, as, and because, Christ has loved us. He here instances in some of the expressions of his love to them; he called them friends, communicated his mind to them, was ready to give them what they asked, *Go ye and do likewise.*

2. It is required by his precept. He interposeth his authority, has made it one of the statute laws of his kingdom. Observe how differently it is expressed in these two verses, and both very emphatical.

1. This is my commandment, ver. 12. as if this were the most necessary of all the commandments. As under the law the prohibition of idolatry was the commandment more insisted on, than any other, foreseeing the people's addictedness to that sin; so Christ foreseeing the addictedness of the Christian church to uncharitableness, has laid most stress upon this precept.

2. These things I command you, ver. 17. He speaks as if he were about to give them many things in charge, and yet names this only, that ye love one another; not only because this includes many duties, but because it will have a good influence upon all.

18. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than the lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21. But all these things will they do unto you for my names sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22. If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. 23. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. 24. If I had not done among them the works

which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen, and hated both me and my Father. 25. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

Here Christ discourseth concerning hatred, which is the character and genius of the devil's kingdom, as love is of the kingdom of Christ. Observe here,

1. Who they are in whom this hatred is found, in the world; the children of this world, as distinguished from the children of God; that are in the interests of the god of this world, whose image they bear, and whose power they are subject to. All those, whether Jews or Gentiles, that would not come into the church of Christ, which he audibly called, and visibly separates from this evil world. The calling of these the world speaks, 1. Their number; there were a world of people that opposed Christ and Christianity, Lord, how were they increased that troubled the Son of David! I fear if we should put it to the vote, between Christ and Satan, Satan would out-poll us quite. 2. It speaks their confederacy and combination; these numerous hosts are embodied, and are as one, *Psal.* lxxxiii. 7. Jews and Gentiles that could agree in nothing else, agreed to persecute Christ's ministers. 3. It speaks their spirit and disposition; they are men of the world, *Psal.* xvii. 13, 14. wholly devoted to this world, and the things of it, and never thinking of another world. The people of God, though they are taught to hate the sins of sinners, yet not their persons, but to love and do good to all men. A malicious, spiteful, envious spirit, is not the Spirit of Christ, but of the world.

2. Who they are against whom this hatred is levelled; against the disciples of Christ, against Christ himself, and against the Father.

First, The world hates the disciples of Christ. The world hateth you, ver. 19. and he speaks of it as that which they must expect and count upon, ver. 18. as *1 John* iii. 13. Observe how this comes in here, 1. Christ had expressed the great kindness he had for them as friends, but lest they should be puffed up with this, there was given them, as there was to Paul, a thorn in the flesh, that is, as it is explained there, reproaches and persecutions for Christ's sake, *2 Cor.* xii. 7, 10. 2. He had appointed them their work, but tells them what hardships they should meet with in it, that it might not be a surprize to them, and that they might prepare accordingly. 3. He had charged them to love one another, and need enough they had to love one another, for the world would hate them; to be kind to one another, for they would have a great deal of unkindness and ill will from those that were without. Keep peace among your selves, and that will fortify you against the world's quarrels with you. They that are in the midst of enemies, are concerned to hold together. See,

1. The world's enmity against the followers of Christ; it hateth them. Note, Whom Christ blest, the world curseth. The favourites and heirs of heaven have never been the darlings of this world, since the old enmity was put between the seed of the woman and of the serpent. Why did Cain hate Abel, but because his works were righteous? Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing; Joseph's brethren hated him, because his Father loved him; Saul hated David, because the Lord was with him. Ahab hated Micaiah, because of his prophecies; such are the causeless causes of the world's hatred.

2. The fruits of that enmity. Two of which we have here, ver. 20. 1. They will persecute you, because they hate you, for hatred is a restless passion. It is the common lot of those who will live godly in Christ Jesus, to suffer persecution, *2 Tim.* iii. 12. Christ foresaw what ill usage his ambassadors would meet with in the world, and yet, for the sake of those few, that by their ministry, were to be called out of the world, he sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. 2. Another fruit of their enmity is implied, that they would reject their doctrine, when Christ saith, *If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours,* he means they will keep yours, and regard yours no more than they have regarded and kept mine. Note, The preachers of the gospel cannot but take the despising of their message to be the greatest injury that can be done to themselves; as it was a great affront to Jeremiah, to say, let us not give heed to any of his words, *Jer.* xviii. 18.

3. The causes of that enmity. The world will hate them.

1. Because they do not belong to it, ver. 19. *If you were of the world, of its spirit, and in its interests, if you were carnal and worldly, the world would love you as its own,* but because you are called out of the world, it hates you, and ever will. Note, 1. We are not to wonder, if those that are devoted to the world are caressed by it, as its friends; most men bless the covetous, *Psal.* x. 3.—xlix. 18. 2. Nor are we to wonder, if those that are delivered from the world are maligned by it as its enemies; when Israel is rescued out of Egypt, the Egyptians will pursue them. Observe, The reason why Christ's disciples are not of the world, is not because they have by their own wisdom and virtue distinguished themselves from the world, but because Christ hath chosen them out



of it to set them apart for himself ; and this is the reason why the world *hates them* ; for, 1. The glory, which by virtue of this choice they are designed for, sets them above the world, and so makes them the objects of its envy. The saints shall judge the world, and the upright have dominion, and therefore they are hated. 2. The grace which by virtue of this choice they are endued with, sets them against the world ; they swim against the stream of the world, and are not conformed to it ; they witness against it, and are not conformed to it. This would support them under all the calamities, which the world's hatred would bring upon them, that therefore they were hated, because they were the choice and chosen ones of the Lord Jesus, and were not of the world. Now, 1. This was no *just cause* for the world's hatred of them ; if we do any thing to make ourselves hateful, we have reason to lament it, but if men hate us for that for which they should love and value us, we have reason to pity them, but no reason to perplex ourselves. Nay, 2. This was *just cause* for their own joy. He that is hated because he is rich, and prospers, cares not who has the vexation of it, while he has the satisfaction of it ; *Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo ipse domi*. Timon in Hor. Much more may they hug themselves, whom the world hates, but Christ loves.

2. Another cause of the world's hating you will be, because they do belong to Christ, *ver. 21. for my names sake*. Here is the core of the controversy, whatever is pretended, this is the ground of the quarrel, they hate Christ's disciples, because they *bear his name*, and *bear up his name* in the world. Note, 1. It is the character of Christ's disciples, that they stand for his name. The name into which they were baptized is, that which they will live and die by. 2. It has commonly been the lot of those that appear for Christ's name to suffer for so doing ; to suffer *many things*, and *hard things*, *all these things*. It is matter of comfort to the greatest sufferers, if they suffer *for Christ's name sake*. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, *happy are ye*, 1 Pet. iv. 14. happy indeed, considering not only the honour that is imprinted upon those sufferings, *Acts v. 41.* but the comfort that is infused into them ; and especially the crown of glory which those sufferings lead to. If we *suffer with Christ*, and for Christ, *we shall reign with him*.

3. After all, it is the world's ignorance that is the true cause of its enmity to the disciples of Christ, *ver. 19. Because they know not him that sent me*. 1. They know not God. If men had but a due acquaintance with the very first principles of natural religion, and did but know God, though they would not embrace Christianity, yet they could not hate and persecute it. Those have no knowledge who eat up God's people, *Psal. xiv. 4.* 2. They know not God, as *he that sent* our Lord Jesus, and authorized him to be the great mediator of the peace. We do not rightly know God, if we do not know him *in Christ*, and they who persecute those whom he sends, make it to appear they know not that he was sent of God. See 1 Cor. ii. 8.

Secondly, The world hates Christ himself. And this is spoken of here for two ends.

1. To mitigate the trouble of his followers arising from the world's hatred, and to make it the less strange, and the less grievous, *ver. 18. Ye know that it hated me before you, πρὸ ὑμῶν*. We read it as signifying priority of time ; he begun in the bitter cup of suffering, and then left us to pledge him ; but it may be read as speaking his superiority over them ; *ye know* that it hated me, *your first*, i. e. your chief and captain, your leader and commander. 1. If Christ who excelled in goodness, and was perfectly innocent, and universally benignant, was hated, can we expect that any virtue or merit of ours should screen us from malice ? 2. If our Master, the founder of our religion met with so much opposition in the planting of it, his servants and followers can look for no other in propagating and professing it.

For this he refers them, *ver. 20.* to his own words, at their admission into discipleship, *remember the word that I said unto you*. It would help us to understand Christ's later sayings, to compare them with his former sayings. Nor would any thing contribute more to the making of us easy, than *remembering the words* of Christ, which will expound his providences. Now in this word there is,

1. A plain truth ; *the servant is not greater than the Lord*. This he had said to them, *Mat. x. 24.* Christ is our Lord, and therefore we must diligently attend all his motions, and patiently *acquiesce* in all his disposals, for the servant is *inferior* to his lord. The plainest truths are sometimes the strongest arguments for the hardest duties ; Elihu answers a multitude of Job's murmurings, with this one self-evident truth, *that God is greater than man*, Job xxxiii. 12. So here,

2. A proper inference drawn from it, *If they have persecuted me, as you have seen, and are likely to see much more, they will also persecute you* ; you may expect it, and count upon it, for, 1. You will do the same that I have done to provoke them, you will reprove them for their sins, and call them to repentance, and give them strict rules of holy living, which they will not bear. 2. You cannot do more than I have done to oblige them ; after so great an instance, let none wonder if they *suffer ill*, for *doing well*. He adds, *If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also* ; as there have been a few, and but a few, that have been wrought upon

by my preaching, so there will be by yours, a few, and but a few. Some give another sense of this, making *ἐτήνησαν*, to be put for *παρηνήσαν* ; if they have *lain in wait* for my sayings, with a design to ensnare me, they will in like manner lie in wait to entangle you in your talk.

2. It serves to aggravate the wickedness of this unbelieving world, and to discover its exceeding sinfulness ; to hate and persecute the apostles was bad enough, but in them to hate and persecute Christ himself, was much worse. The world is generally in an ill name in Scripture, and nothing can put it into a worse name than this, that it *hated* Jesus Christ. There is a world of people that are haters of Christ.

Two things he insists upon to aggravate the wickedness of those that hated him.

1. That there was the greatest reason imaginable why they should *love him* ; men's good words and good works use to recommend them ; now as to Christ,

(1.) His words were such as merited their love, *ver. 22. If I had not spoken unto them, to court their love, they had not had sin*, their opposition had not amounted to a hatred of me ; their sin had been comparatively no sin. But now I have said so much to them to recommend my self to their best affection, they have no pretence, no excuse for their sin. Observe here,

1. The advantage which they have that enjoy the gospel ; Christ in it *comes*, and *speaks to them* ; he spoke in person to the men of that generation, and is still speaking to us by our bibles and ministers, and as one that has the most unquestionable authority over us, and affection for us. Every word of his is pure, carries with it a commanding majesty, and yet a condescending tenderness, able, one would think, to charm the deafest adder.

2. The excuse which they have that enjoy not the gospel, *If I had not spoken to them, if they had never heard of Christ and salvation by him, they had not had sin*. 1. Not this *kind of sin*. They had not been chargeable with a contempt of Christ, if he had not come and made a tender of his grace to them. As *sin is not imputed where there is no law*, so unbelief is not imputed where there is no gospel ; and where it is imputed, it is thus far the only damning sin, that being a sin against the remedy, other sins would not damn, if the guilt of them were not bound on with this. 2. Not such a *degree of sin*. If they had not had the gospel among them, their other sins had not been so bad ; for the *times of ignorance God winked at*, Luke xii. 47, 48.

3. The aggravated guilt which they lie under to whom Christ has *come and spoke in vain*, whom he has called and invited in vain, with whom he has reasoned and pleaded in vain ; they *have no cloke for their sin*, they are altogether inexcusable, and in the judgment day will be speechless, and will not have a word to say for themselves. Note, The clearer and fuller the discoveries are which are made us of the grace and truth of Jesus Christ, the more is said to us that is convincing and endearing, the greater is our sin if we do not *love him* and *believe in him*. The word of Christ strips sin of its cloke, that it may *appear sin*.

(2.) His works were such as merited their love, as well as his words, *ver. 24. If I had not done among them in their country, and before their eyes, such works as no other man ever did, they had not had sin*, their unbelief and enmity had been excusable, and they might have had some colour to say, that his word was not to be credited, if not otherwise confirmed ; but he produced satisfactory proofs of his divine mission, *works which no other man did*. Note, 1. As the Creator demonstrates his power and Godhead by his works, *Rom. i. 20.* so doth the Redeemer. His miracles, his mercies, works of wonder, and works of grace, prove him sent of God, and sent on a kind errand. 2. Christ's works were such as *no man ever did*. No common person that had not a commission from heaven, and God with him, could work miracles, *John iii. 2.* And no prophet ever wrought such miracles, so many, so illustrious ; Moses and Elias wrought miracles as servants, by a derived power ; but Christ, as a Son, by his own power. This was it that amazed the people, that with authority he remanded diseases and devils, *Mar. i. 27.* they owned they never saw the like, *Mar. ii. 17.* They were all good works, works of mercy ; and this seems especially intended here, for he is upbraiding them with this, that they hated him. One that was so universally useful, more than ever any man was, one would think, should have been universally beloved, and yet even he is hated. 3. The works of Christ enhance the guilt of sinners infidelity and enmity to him, the last degree of wickedness and absurdity. If they had only heard his words, and not seen his works ; if we had only his sermons upon record, and not his miracles, unbelief might have pleaded want of proof ; but now it has no excuse. Nay, the rejecting of Christ both by them and us, has in it the sin not only of obstinate unbelief, but of base ingratitude. They saw Christ to be most amiable and studious to do them a kindness, yet they hated him, and studied to do him mischief. And we see in his word that great love wherewith he loved us, and yet are not wrought upon by it.

2. That there was no reason at all why they should hate him. Some, that at one time, will say and do that which is recommending, yet at another time will say and do that which is provoking and disobliging ; but our Lord Jesus not only did much to merit men's esteem, and good will, but never did any thing justly to



to incur their displeasure ; this he pleads by quoting a scripture for it, *ver. 25. This comes to pass*, this unreasonable hatred of me, and of my disciples for my sake, *that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law*, (i. e. in the Old Testament, which is a law, and was received by them as a law,) *they hated me without a cause* ; this David speaks of himself as a type of Christ, *Psal. xxxv. 19.—lxix. 4.* Note, 1. They that hate Christ hate him without any just cause : enmity to Christ is unreasonable enmity. We think those deserve to be hated that are haughty and froward, but Christ is meek and lowly, compassionate and tender ; those also that under colour of complaisance are malicious, envious, and revengeful ; but Christ devoted himself to the service of those that used him, nay, and of those that abused him ; toiled for others ease, and impoverished himself to enrich us. Those we think *hateful* that are *hurtful to kings and provinces*, and disturbers of the publick peace ; but Christ, on the contrary, was the greatest blessing imaginable to his country, and yet was hated. He testified indeed that *their works were evil*, with a design to make them good, but to hate him for that cause was to hate him without cause. 2. Herein the scripture was fulfilled, and the antitype answered the type. Saul and his courtiers hated David without cause, for he had been serviceable to him with his harp, and with his sword ; Absalom and his party hated him, though to him he had been an indulgent father, and to them a great benefactor. Thus was the Son of David hated, and hunted most unjustly. They that hated Christ, did not design therein to fulfil the scripture, but God, in permitting it, had that in his eye ; and it confirms our faith in Christ as the Messiah, that even this was foretold concerning him, and being foretold was accomplished in him : And we must not think it strange or hard, if it have a further accomplishment in us. We are apt to justify our complaints of injuries done us, with this, that they are causeless, whereas the more they are so, the more like they are to the sufferings of Christ, and may be the more easily borne.

Thirdly, In Christ the world hates God himself ; this is twice said here, *ver. 23. He that hateth me*, though he thinks his hatred goes no further, yet really he *hates my Father also*. And again, *ver. 24. They have seen and hated both me and my Father*. Note, 1. There are those that hate God, notwithstanding the beauty of his nature, and the bounty of his providence ; they are enraged at his justice, as *the devils* that believe it and tremble, are vexed at his dominion, and would gladly *break his bands asunder*. They who cannot bring themselves to deny that there is a God, and yet wish there were none, they see and hate him. 2. *Hatred of Christ* will be construed and adjudged *hatred of God*, for he is in his person his Father's express image, and in his office his great agent and ambassador. God will have all men to honour the Son as they honour the Father, and therefore what entertainment the Son has, that the Father has. Hence it is easy to infer, that those who are enemies to the Christian religion, however they may cry up natural religion, are really enemies to all religion. Deists are in effect atheists, and they that ridicule the light of the gospel, would, if they could, extinguish even natural light, and shake off all obligations of conscience and the fear of God. Let an unbelieving malignant world know that their enmity to the gospel of Christ, will be looked upon in the great day as an enmity to the *blessed God himself* ; and let all that suffer for righteousness sake, according to the will of God, take comfort from this ; if God himself be hated *in them*, and struck at *through them*, they need not be either ashamed of their cause, or afraid of the issue.

26. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. 27. And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Christ having spoken of the great opposition which his gospel was likely to meet with in the world, and the hardships that would be put upon the preachers of it, lest any should fear that they, and it, would be run down by that violent torrent, he here intimates to all those that were well wishers to his cause and interest, what effectual provision was made for the supporting it, both by the principal testimony of the Spirit, *ver. 26.* and the subordinate testimony of the apostles, *ver. 27.* and testimonies are the proper supports of truth.

First, It is here promised that the blessed Spirit shall maintain the cause of Christ in the world, notwithstanding the opposition it should meet with. Christ, when he was reviled, *committed his injured cause* to his Father, and did not lose by his silence, for the Comforter came, pleaded it powerfully, and carried it triumphantly. *When the Comforter, or Advocate is come, which proceedeth from the Father, and whom I will send* to supply the want of my bodily presence, he shall testify of me, against those that *hate me without cause*.

We have more in this verse concerning the holy Ghost, than in any one verse beside in the bible ; and being baptized into his name, we are concerned to acquaint ourselves with him, as far as he is revealed.

1. Here is an account of him in his essence or subsistence rather. He is *the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father*. Here, 1. He is spoken of as a distinct person ; not a quality or property, but a person under the proper name of a Spirit, and proper title of the *Spirit of truth*, a title fully given him where he is brought in testifying. 2. As a *divine person* that *proceedeth from the Father*, by out-goings that were of old *from everlasting*. The *spirit* or *breath* of man, called the *breath of life*, proceedeth from the man, and by it, modified, he delivers his mind, by it, invigorated, he sometimes *exerts his strength* to *blow out* what he would extinguish, and *blow up* what he would excite : Thus the blessed Spirit is the emanation of *divine light*, and the energy of *divine power*. The rays of the sun, by which it dispenseth and diffuseth its light, heat, and influence, proceed from the sun, and yet are one with it. The *Nicene* creed saith, the Spirit *proceedeth from the Father and the Son*, for he is called the *Spirit of the Son*, Gal. iv. 6. And the Son is here said to *send him*. The *Greek* church chose rather to say, *from the Father by the Son*.

2. In his mission. 1. He will come in a more plentiful effusion of his gifts, graces, and powers, than had ever yet been. Christ had been long the *ἐρχόμενος*, *he that should come* ; now the blessed Spirit is so. 2. *I will send him to you from the Father*. He had said, *chap. xiv. 16. I will pray the Father, and he shall send you the Comforter* ; that speaks the Spirit to be the fruit of the *intercession* Christ makes within the veil ; here he saith, *I will send him*, that speaks him to be the fruit of his dominion within the veil. The Spirit was sent, 1. By Christ as Mediator, now *ascended on high* to give gifts unto men, and all power being given to him. 2. *From the Father*. Not only from heaven, my Father's house ; the Spirit was given in a *sound from heaven*, Acts ii. 2. but according to my Father's will and appointment, and with his concurring power and authority. 3. To the apostles, to instruct them in their preaching, enable them for working, and carry them through their sufferings. He was given to them and their successors, both in Christianity and in the ministry ; to them and their seed, and their seed's seed, according to that promise, *Ija. lix. 21.*

3. In his office and operations ; which are two,

1. One implied in the title given to him, he is the Comforter, or Advocate: An Advocate for Christ to maintain his cause against the world's iniquity, a Comforter to the saints against the world's hatred.

2. Another expressed, *he shall testify of me*. He is not only an advocate, but a witness for Jesus Christ ; he is one of the three that *bear record in heaven*, and the first of the three that *bear witness on earth*, 1 John v. 7. He instructed the apostles, and enabled them to work miracles ; he indited the scriptures which are the standing witnesses that *testify of Christ*, John v. 39. The power of the ministry is derived from the Spirit, for he qualifies ministers, and the power of Christianity too ; for he sanctifies Christians, and in both testifies of Christ.

Secondly, It is here promised that the apostles also, by the Spirit's assistance, should have the honour of being Christ's witnesses, *ver. 27. And ye also shall bear witness* of me, being competent witnesses, for *ye have been with me* from the beginning of my ministry. Observe here ;

1. That the apostles were appointed to be witnesses for Christ in the world. When he had said, *the Spirit shall testify*, he adds, and you also shall *bear witness*. Note, The Spirit's working is not to supersede, but to engage and encourage ours. Though the Spirit testify, ministers also must bear their testimony, and people attend to it ; for the Spirit of grace witnesseth and worketh by the means of grace. The apostles were the first witnesses that were called in the famous trial between Christ and the prince of this world, which issued in the ejection of the intruder. This speaks, 1. The work cut out for them, they were to attest the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning Christ, for the recovering of his just right, and the maintaining of his crown and dignity. Though Christ's disciples fled when they should have been witnesses for him upon his trials before the high priest and Pilate, yet after the Spirit was poured out upon them, they appeared courageous in vindication of the cause of Christ against the accusations it was loaded with. The truth of the Christian religion was to be proved very much by the evidence of matter of fact, especially Christ's resurrection, of which the apostles were in a particular manner chosen witnesses, *Acts x. 41.* and they bore their testimony accordingly, *Acts iii. 15.—v. 32.* Christ's ministers are his witnesses. 2. The honour put upon them hereby, that they should be *workers together with God*. The *Spirit shall testify of me*, and you also under the conduct of the Spirit, and in concurrence with the Spirit (who will preserve you from mistaking in that which you relate on your own knowledge, and will inform you of that which you cannot know but by revelation) *shall bear witness*. This might encourage them against the hatred and contempt of the world, that Christ had honoured them, and would own them.

2. That they were qualified to be so ; *I have been with me from the beginning*. They not only heard his publick sermons, but had constant private converse with him. He *went about doing good*, and while others saw his wonderful and merciful works that he

did



did in their own town and country only, they that went about with him were witnesses of them all. They had likewise opportunity of observing the unspotted purity of his conversation, and could witness for him that they never saw in him, or heard from him any thing that had the least tincture of human frailty. Note, 1. We have great reason to receive the record which the apostles gave of Christ, for they did not speak by hearsay, but what they had the greatest assurance of imaginable, 2 *Pet.* i. 16. 1 *John* i. 1, 3. 2. Those are best able to bear witness for Christ that have themselves been with him, by faith, hope, and love, and by living a life of communion with God in him. Ministers must first learn Christ, and then preach him. Those speak best of the things of God that speak experimentally. It is particularly a great advantage to have been acquainted with Christ *from the beginning*, to understand all things from the *very first*, *Luke* i. 3. To have been with him from the beginning of our days. An early acquaintance, and constant converse with the gospel of Christ, will make a man like a good householder.

## C H A P. XVI.

*Among other glorious things God hath spoken of himself, this is one, I wound, and I heal, Deut. xxxii. 39. Christ's discourse in this chapter, which continues and concludes his farewell sermon to his disciples doth so. 1. Here are wounding words in the notice he gives them of the troubles that were before them, ver. 1,—6. 2. Here are healing words in the comforts he administers to them for their support under those troubles, which are five. (1.) That he would send them the Comforter, ver. 7,—15. (2.) That he would visit them again at his resurrection, ver. 16,—22. (3.) That he would secure to them an answer of peace to all their prayers, ver. 23,—27. (4.) That he was now but returning to his Father, ver. 28,—32. (5.) That whatever troubles they might meet with in this world by virtue of his victory over it, they should be sure of peace in him, ver. 33.*

1. **T**HESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. 2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service. 3. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. 4. But these things I have told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5. But now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? 6. But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

Christ dealt faithfully with his disciples when he sent them forth on his errands, for he *told them the worst* of it, that they might sit down and count the cost. He had bid them in the chapter before to expect the world's *hatred*; now here in these verses,

First, He gives them a reason why he alarmed them thus with the expectation of trouble; *These things have I spoken unto you that ye should not be offended, or scandalized, ver. 1.*

1. The disciples of Christ are apt to be *offended at the cross*; and the offence of the cross is a dangerous temptation, even to good men, either to turn back from the ways of God, or turn aside out of them, or drive on heavily in them; to quit either their integrity or their comfort: It is not for nothing that a suffering time is called *an hour of temptation*.

2. Our Lord Jesus, by giving us notice of trouble, designed to take off the terror of it, that it might not be a surprize to us. Of all the adversaries of our peace in this world of troubles, none insult us more violently, nor put our troops more into disorder, than disappointment doth; but we can easily welcome a guest we expect, and being forewarned are fore-armed. *Præmoniti, præmuniti.*

Secondly, He foretels particularly what they should suffer; *ver. 2.* They that have power to do it, shall *put you out of their synagogues*; and that is not the worst, *they shall kill you.* *Ecce duo gladii*, behold *two swords* drawn against the followers of the Lord Jesus.

1. The sword of *ecclesiastical censure*; this is drawn against them by the Jews, for they were the only pretenders to church power. They shall *cast you out of their synagogues*, *συνάγωγας ποιήσουσιν ὑμᾶς*, they shall make you excommunicates. 1. They shall cast you out of the particular synagogues ye were members of. At first they scourged them in their synagogues as contemners of the law, *Mat. x. 17.* and at length cast them out as incorrigible. 2. They shall cast you out of the congregation of Israel in general, the national church of the Jews; shall debar you from the privileges of that, put you into the condition of an out-law, *qui caput gerit lupinum*; they will look upon you as Samaritans, as heathen men and publicans. *Interdico tibi aqua & igne.* And were it

not for the penalties, forfeitures, and incapacities incurred hereby, it would be no injury to be thus driven out of a house infected and falling. Note, It has often been the lot of Christ's disciples to be unjustly excommunicated. Many a good truth has been branded with an anathema, and many a child of God *delivered to Satan*.

2. The sword of civil power. The time cometh, *the hour is come*; now things are likely to be worse with you than hitherto they have been; when you are expelled as hereticks, they will *kill you, and think they do God service*, and others will think so too.

1. You will find them *really cruel*, they will *kill you*. Christ's sheep have been accounted as sheep for the slaughter; the twelve apostles (we are told) were all put to death, except John. Christ had said, *chap. xv. 27. ye shall bear witness, μαρτυρεῖτε, ye shall be martyrs*, shall seal the truth with their blood, their heart's blood.

2. You will find them *seemingly conscientious*; they will think they do God service; they will seem *λατρεῖαν περὶ σφείρων*, to offer a good sacrifice to God; as those that cast out God's servants of old, and said, *let the Lord be glorified*, *Isa. lxvi. 5.* Note, 1. It is possible for those that are real enemies to God's service, to pretend a mighty zeal for it. The devil's work has many a time been done in God's livery, and one of the most mischievous enemies Christianity ever had, sits in the temple of God. Nay, 2. It is common to patronize an enmity to religion with a colour of duty to God, and service to his church. God's people have suffered the greatest hardships from conscientious persecutors; Paul verily thought he *ought to do what he did against the name of Jesus*: This doth not at all lessen the sin of the persecutors, for villainies will never be consecrated by entitling God to them, but it doth greaten the sufferings of the persecuted to die under the character of being enemies to God; but there will be a resurrection of names as well as of bodies at the great day.

Thirdly, He gives them the true reason of the world's enmity and rage against them. *ver. 3. These things will they do unto you, not because you have done them any harm, but because they have not known the Father, or me.* Let this comfort you, that none will be your enemies but the worst of men. Note, 1. Many that pretend to know God are wretchedly ignorant of him. They that pretended to *do him service*, thought they knew him, but it was a wrong notion they had of him. Israel transgressed the covenant, and yet cried, *my God, we know thee*, *Hos. viii. 1, 2.* 2. They that are ignorant of Christ cannot have any right knowledge of God. In vain do men pretend to know God and religion, while they slight Christ and Christianity. 3. Those are very ignorant indeed of God and Christ, that think it an acceptable piece of service to persecute good people. They that know Christ, know that he *came not into the world to destroy mens lives, but to save them*; that he rules by the power of truth and love, not of fire and sword. Never was such a persecuting church, as that which makes *ignorance the mother of devotion*.

Fourthly, He tells them why he gave them notice of this now, and why not sooner.

1. Why he told them of it now, *ver. 4.* not to discourage them, or add to their present sorrow; nor did he tell them of their danger, that they might contrive how to avoid it, but that, when *the time shall come* (and you may be sure it will come) you may *remember that I told you*. Note, When suffering times come, it will be of use to us to remember what Christ has told us of sufferings. 1. That our belief of Christ's foresight and faithfulness may be confirmed; and, 2. That the trouble may be the less grievous, for we were told of it before, and we took up our profession in expectation of it, so that it ought not to be a surprize to us, nor looked upon as a wrong to us. As Christ in his sufferings, so his followers in theirs, should have an eye to the *fulfilling of the scripture*.

2. Why he did not tell them of it sooner. *I speak not this to you from the beginning*, when you and I came to be first acquainted, because *I was with you*. 1. While he was with them he bore the *shock of the world's malice*, and stood in the front of the battle; against him the powers of darkness levelled all their force, not against *small or great*, but only against the *King of Israel*, and therefore he did not need then to say so much to them of suffering, because it did not fall much to their share; but we do find that from the beginning he bid them prepare for sufferings; and therefore, 2. It seems rather to be meant of the promise of *another Comforter*. This he had said little of to them *at the beginning*, because he was himself with them to instruct, guide, and comfort them, and then they needed not the promise of the Spirit's extraordinary presence. The children of the bride-chamber would not have so much need of a comforter till the bridegroom should be taken away.

Fifthly, He expresseth a very affectionate concern for the present sadness of his disciples, upon occasion of what he had said to them, *ver. 5, 6. Now I am to be no longer with you, but go my way to him that sent me*, to repose there, after this fatigue, and none of you *asketh me* with any courage, *whither goest thou?* But instead of enquiring after that which would comfort you, you pore upon that which looks melancholy, and *sorrow hath filled your heart*.

1. He



1. He had told them that he was about to leave them; *New I go my way*: He was not driven away by force, but voluntarily departed; his life was not extorted from him, but deposited by him: He went to him that sent him, to give an account of his negotiation. Thus, when we depart out of this world, we go to him that sent us into it, which should make us all solicitous to live to good purposes, remembering we have a commission to execute, which must be returned at a certain day. 2. He had told them what hard things they must suffer when he was gone, and that they must not expect such an easy, quiet life as they had had. Now, if these were the legacies he had to leave to them, who had left all for him, they would be tempted to think, they had made a sorry bargain of it, and were, for the present, in a consternation about it, in which their Master sympathizeth with them, and blames them,

1. That they were careless of the means of comfort, and did not stir up themselves to seek it; *none of you asks me, Whither goest thou?* Peter had started that question, chap. xiii. 36. and Thomas had seconded it, chap. xiv. 5. but they did not pursue it, they did not take the answer, were in the dark concerning it, and did not enquire further, nor seek for fuller satisfaction; did not continue seeking, continue knocking. See what a compassionate teacher Christ is, and how condescending to the weak and ignorant! Many a teacher will not endure that the learner should ask the same question twice; if he cannot take a thing quickly, let him go without it; but our Lord Jesus knows how to deal with babes, that must be taught with *precept upon precept*. If the disciples here would have pushed on that enquiry, they would have found, that his going away was for his advancement, and therefore his departure from them should not inordinately trouble them; for why should they be against his preferment? and for their advantage; and therefore their sufferings for him should not inordinately trouble them; for a sight of *Jesus at the right hand of God*, would be an effectual support to them, as it was to Stephen. Note, A humble, believing enquiry into the design and tendency of the darkest dispensations of providence, would help to reconcile us to them, and to grieve the less, and fear the less, because of them; it will silence us to ask, Whence they come? but will abundantly satisfy us to ask, Whither they go? for we know they *work for good*, Rom. viii. 28.

2. That they were too intent, and pored too much upon the occasions of their grief: *Sorrow has filled their heart*. Christ had said enough to fill them with joy, chap. xv. 11. but, by looking at that only which made against them, and overlooking that which made for them, they were so full of sorrow, that there was no room left for joy. Note, It is the common fault and folly of melancholy Christians, to dwell only upon the dark side of the cloud; to meditate nothing but terror, and turn a deaf ear to the voice of joy and gladness. That which filled the disciples hearts with sorrow, and hindered the operation of the cordials Christ administered, was too great an affection to this present life: They were big with hopes of their Master's external kingdom and glory, and that they should shine and reign with him; and now, instead of that, to hear of nothing but bonds and afflictions, this filled them with sorrow. Nothing is a greater prejudice to our joy in God, than the love of the world; and the sorrow of the world the consequence of it.

7. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9. Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13. Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15. All things that the Father hath, are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

As it was usual with the Old Testament prophets to comfort the church in its calamities with the promise of the Messiah, Isa. ix. 6. Mic. v. 5. Zech. iii. 8. so the Messiah being come, the promise of the Spirit was the great cordial, and is still.

Three things we have here concerning the Comforter's coming:

First, That Christ's departure was absolutely necessary to the Comforter's coming, ver. 7. The disciples were so loth to believe this, that Christ saw cause to assert it with a more than ordinary solemnity; *I tell you the truth*. We may be confident of the truth of every thing that Christ has told us, he hath no design to impose upon us. Now, to make them easy, he here tells them,

1. In general, *It was expedient for them he should go away*. This was strange doctrine, but, if it was true, it was comfortable enough,

and shewed them how absurd their sorrow was. *It is expedient*, not only for me, but for you also, that I go away; though they do not see it, and are loth to believe it, so it is. Note, 1. Those things oft seem grievous to us, that are really expedient for us; and particularly our going away when we have finished our course. 2. Our Lord Jesus is always for that which is most expedient for us; whether we think so or no: He deals not with us according to the folly of our own choices, but graciously over-rules them, and gives us the physic we are loth to take, because he knows it is good for us.

2. *It was therefore expedient*, because it was in order to the sending of the Spirit. Now observe,

(1.) That Christ's going was in order to the Comforter's coming.

1. This is expressed negatively: *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come*. And why not? 1. So it was settled in the divine counsels concerning this affair, and the measures must not be altered; *shall the earth be forsaken for them?* He that gives freely, may recal one gift before he bestows another; while we would fondly hold all. 2. It is congruous enough that the ambassador extraordinary should be recalled, before the envoy come that is constantly to reside. 3. The sending of the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ's purchase, and that purchase was to be made by his death, which was his going away. 4. It was to be in answer to his intercession within the veil: See chap. xiv. 16. Thus must this gift be both paid for, and prayed for, by our Lord Jesus, that we might learn to put the greater value upon it. 5. The great argument the Spirit was to use in convincing the world, must be Christ's ascension into heaven, and his welcome there: See ver. 10. and chap. vii. 39. 6. The disciples must be weaned from his bodily presence, which they were too apt to dote upon, before they were duly prepared to receive the spiritual aids and comforts of a new dispensation.

2. It is expressed positively: *If I depart, I will send him to you*; q. d. trust me to provide effectually that you shall be no losers by my departure. The glorified Redeemer is not unmindful of his church on earth, nor will ever leave it without its necessary supports: Though he departs, he sends the Comforter; nay, he departs on purpose to send him. Thus still, though one generation of ministers and Christians departs, another is raised up in their room; for Christ will maintain his own cause.

(2.) That the presence of Christ's Spirit in his church is so much better, and more desirable, than his bodily presence, that it was really expedient for us, he should go away, to send the Comforter. His corporal presence could be but in one place at one time, but his Spirit is every where, in all places, at all times; wherever two or three are gathered in his name. Christ's bodily presence draws mens eyes, his Spirit draws their hearts, that was the letter which kills, his Spirit gives life.

Secondly, That the coming of the Spirit was absolutely necessary to the carrying on of Christ's interest on earth, ver. 8. And when he is come, *ἐλθὼν ἐκείνος*; he that is sent, is willing of himself to come, and at his first coming he will do this; *he will reprove*, or, as the margin reads it, *he will convince the world*, by your ministry, concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

1. See here what the office of the Spirit is, and on what errand he is sent: 1. To reprove. The Spirit, by the word and conscience, is a reprover; ministers are reprovers by office, and by them the Spirit reproveth. 2. To convince. It is a law term, and speaks the office of the judge in summing up the evidence, and setting a matter that has been long canvassed in a clear and true light. He shall convince, i. e. he shall put to silence, the adversaries of Christ and his cause, by discovering and demonstrating the falshood and fallacy of that which they have maintained, and the truth and certainty of that which they have opposed. Note, Convincing work is the Spirit's work, he can do it effectually, and none but he; man may open the cause, but it is the Spirit only that can open the heart. The Spirit is called the Comforter, ver. 7. and here it is said, *he shall convince*; one would think that were cold comfort, but it is the method the Spirit takes, first to convince, and then to comfort; first to lay open the wound, and then apply healing medicines. Or, taking conviction more generally, for a demonstration of what is right, it intimates, that the Spirit's comforts are solid, and grounded upon truth.

2. See who they are whom he is to reprove, and convince; the world, both Jew and Gentile. 1. He shall give the world the most powerful means of conviction, for the apostles shall go into all the world, backed by the Spirit, to preach the gospel, fully proved. 2. He shall sufficiently provide for the taking off, and silencing of the objections and prejudices of the world against the gospel: Many an infidel was convinced of all, and judged of all, 1 Cor. xiv. 24. 3. He shall effectually and savingly convince many in the world, some in every age, in every place, in order to their conversion to the faith of Christ. Now this was an encouragement to the disciples, in reference to the difficulties they were likely to meet with, (1.) That they should see good done, Satan's kingdom fall like lightning, which would be their joy, as it was his. Even this malignant world the Spirit shall work upon, and the conviction of sinners is the comfort of faithful ministers. (2.) That this would be the fruit of their services and sufferings, these should contribute very much to this good work.

3. See



3. See what *the Spirit* shall convince *the world* of;  
(1.) *Of sin*, ver. 9. *because they believe not on me*.

1. *The Spirit* is sent to convince sinners of sin, not barely to tell them of it, in conviction there is more than that, it is to prove it upon them, and force them to own it, as they, *John* viii. 9. that were convicted of their own consciences, make them to know their abominations. *The Spirit* convinceth of the fact of sin, that we have done so and so; of the fault of sin, that we have done ill in doing so; of the folly of sin, that we have acted against right reason, and our true interest; of the filth of sin, that by it we are become odious to God; of the fountain of sin, the corrupt nature; and, lastly, of the fruit of sin, that the end thereof is death. *The Spirit* demonstrates the pravity and degeneracy of the whole world, that all the world is guilty before God.

2. *The Spirit*, in conviction, fastens especially upon the sin of unbelief, their not believing in Christ,

(1.) As the great reigning sin. There was, and is, a world of people, that believe not in Jesus Christ, and they are not sensible that it is their sin; natural conscience tells them, that murder and theft are sins; but it is a supernatural work of *the Spirit*, to convince them, that it is a sin to suspend their belief of the gospel, and to reject the salvation offered by it. Natural religion, after it has given us its best discoveries and directions, lays and leaves us under this further obligation, that whatever divine revelation shall be made to us, at any time, with sufficient evidence to prove it divine, we accept it, and submit to it; which law they transgress, who, when God speaketh to us by his Son, refuse him that speaketh; and therefore it is sin.

(2.) As the great ruining sin. Every sin is so in its own nature, no sin is so to them that believe in Christ; so that it is unbelief that damns sinners; it is because of that, that they cannot enter into rest, that they cannot escape the wrath of God; it is a sin against the remedy.

(3.) As that which is at the bottom of all sin; so Calvin takes it. *The Spirit* shall convince *the world*, that the true reason why sin reigns among them is, because they are not by faith united to Christ: *Ne putemus vel guttam unam rectitudinis sine Christo nobis inesse*. Calvin.

(2.) *Of righteousness*, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more, ver. 10. We may understand this,

1. Of Christ's personal righteousness. He shall convince *the world*, that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ the righteous, 1 John ii. 1. as the centurion owned, *Luke* xxiii. 47. *Certainly this was a righteous man*. His enemies put him under the worst of characters, and multitudes were not, or would not, be convinced but that he was an ill man, which strengthened their prejudices against his doctrine, but he is justified by *the Spirit*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. he is proved to be a righteous man, and not a deceiver; and then the point is, in effect, gained; for he is either the great Redeemer, or a great cheat; but a cheat we are sure he is not.

Now by what medium or argument will *the Spirit* convince men of the sincerity of our Lord Jesus? Why, 1. Their seeing him no more, will contribute something towards the removal of their prejudices; they shall see him no more, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the form of a servant, which made them slight him. Moses was more respected after his removal, than before. But, 2. His going to the Father, would be a full conviction of it. The coming of *the Spirit*, according to the promise, was a proof of Christ's exaltation to God's right hand, Acts ii. 36, 37. and that was a demonstration of his righteousness; for the holy God would never set a deceiver at his right hand.

2. Of Christ's righteousness, communicated to us for our justification and salvation; that everlasting righteousness, which Messiah was to bring in, Dan. ix. 24. Now,

(1.) *The Spirit* shall convince men of this righteousness; having, by convictions of sin, shewed them their need of a righteousness, lest that drive them to despair, he will shew them where it is to be had, and how they may, upon their believing, be acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous in God's sight. It was hard to convince those of this righteousness, that went about to establish their own, Rom. x: 3. but *the Spirit* will do it.

(2.) Christ's ascension is the great argument proper to convince men of this righteousness: *I go to the Father, and*, as an evidence of my welcome with him, *you shall see me no more*. If Christ had left any part of his undertaking unfinished, he had been sent back again; but now we are sure he is at the right hand of God, we are sure of being justified through him.

(3.) *Of judgment*, because the prince of this world is judged, ver. 10. Observe here,

1. The devil, the prince of this world, was judged; was discovered to be a great deceiver and destroyer; and, as such, judgment was entered against him, and execution in part done: He was cast out of the Gentile world, when his oracles were silenced, and his altars deserted; cast out of the bodies of many in Christ's name, which miraculous power continued long in the church; he was cast out of the souls of people by the grace of God working with the gospel of Christ; he fell as lightning from heaven.

2. This is a good argument wherewith *the Spirit* convinceth *the world* of judgment, that is, 1. Of inherent holiness and sanctification, Matt. xii. 18. By the judgment of the prince of this world,

it appears, that Christ is stronger than Satan, and can disarm and dispossess him, and set up his throne upon the ruins of his. 2. Of a new and better dispensation of things: He shall shew that Christ's errand into *the world*, was to set things to right in it, and to introduce times of reformation, and regeneration; and he proves it by this, that the prince of this world, the great master of mischief, is judged, and expelled: All will be well when his power is broken, who made all the mischief. 3. Of the power and dominion of the Lord Jesus: He shall convince *the world* that all judgment is committed to him, and that he is Lord of all; which is evidently this, that he has judged the prince of this world, has broken the serpent's head, destroyed him that had the power of death, and spoiled principalities; if Satan be thus subdued by Christ, we may be sure no other power can stand before him. 4. Of the final day of judgment; all the obstinate enemies of Christ's gospel and kingdom shall certainly be reckoned with at last, for the devil, their ring-leader, is judged.

Thirdly, That the coming of *the Spirit* would be of unspeakable advantage to the disciples themselves; *the Spirit* has work to do, not only on the enemies of Christ, to convince and humble them, but upon his servants and agents, to instruct and comfort them; and therefore it was expedient for them that he should go away.

1. He intimates to them the tender sense he had of their present weakness, ver. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you*, not which should have been said, but which he could and would have said, but ye cannot bear them now. See what a teacher Christ is! (1.) None like him for copiousness; when he hath said much, he hath still many things more to say; treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him; we are not straitened in him, if we be not straitened in ourselves. (2.) None like him for compassion; he would have told them more of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, particularly of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, but they could not bear it, it would have confounded and stumbled them, rather than have given them any satisfaction. When, after his resurrection, they spoke to him of restoring the kingdom to Israel, he referred them to the coming of the holy Ghost, by which they should receive power to bear those discoveries, which were so contrary to the notions they had received, that they could not bear them now.

2. He assures them of sufficient assistances, by the pouring out of *the Spirit*. They were now conscious to themselves of great dulness, and many mistakes, and what shall they do now their Master is leaving them; but when he, the Spirit of truth is come, you will be easy, and all will be well; well indeed! for he shall undertake to guide the apostles, and glorify Christ.

(1.) To guide the apostles; he will take care,

1. That they do not miss their way; he will guide you, as the camp of Israel was guided through the wilderness by the pillar of cloud and fire. *The Spirit* guided their tongues in speaking, and their pens in writing, to secure them from mistakes. *The Spirit* is given us to be our guide, Rom. viii. 14. not only to shew us the way, but to go along with us, by his continued aids and influences.

2. That they do not come short of their end; he will guide them into all truth, as the skilful pilot guides the ship into the port it is bound for. To be led into a truth, is more than barely to know it; it is to be intimately and experimentally acquainted with it; to be piously and strongly affected with it; not only to have the notion of it in our heads, but the relish, and savour, and power of it, in our hearts; it notes a gradual discovery of truth, shining more and more; shall lead you by those truths that are plain and easy, to those that are more difficult.

But how into all truth? The meaning is,

(1.) Into the whole truth, relating to their embassy; whatever was needful or useful for them to know, in order to the due discharge of their office, they should be fully instructed in: What truths they were to teach others, *the Spirit* would teach them, would give them the understanding of, and enable them both to explain and to defend.

(2.) Into nothing but the truth; all that he shall guide you into shall be truth, 1 John ii. 27. the anointing is truth.

In the following words he proves both these:

1. *The Spirit* shall teach nothing but the truth, for he shall not speak of himself, any doctrine distinct from mine, but whatsoever he shall hear, and knows to be the mind of the Father, that, and that only, shall he speak. This intimates, 1. That the testimony of *the Spirit*, in the word, and by the apostles, is what we may rely upon: *The Spirit* knows and searches all things, even the deep things of God, and the apostles received that Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. so that we may venture our souls upon *the Spirit's* word. 2. That the testimony of *the Spirit* always concurs with the word of Christ, for he doth not speak of himself, has no separate interest or intention of his own, but, as in essence, so in records, he is one with the Father and the Son, 1 John v. 7. Mens word and spirit often disagree, but the eternal Word and the eternal Spirit never do.

2. He shall teach you all truth, and keep back nothing that is profitable for you, for he will shew you things to come. *The Spirit* was in the apostles a Spirit of prophecy, it was foretold he should



be so, *Joel* ii. 28. and he was so; *the Spirit shewed them things to come*, as *Acts* xi. 28.—xx. 23.—xxi. 11. *The Spirit* spake of the apostasy of *the latter times*, *1 Tim.* iv. 1. John, when he was in *the Spirit*, had things to come shewed him in vision. Now this was a great satisfaction to their own minds, and of use to them in their conduct, and was also a great confirmation of their mission. Janfenius has a pious note upon this; We should not grudge that *the Spirit* doth not now shew us things to come in this world, as he did to the apostles; let it suffice, that *the Spirit* in the word hath shewed us things to come in the other world, which are our chief concern.

(2.) *The Spirit* undertook to glorify Christ; *ver.* 14, 15.

1. Even the sending of *the Spirit* was the glorifying of Christ: God the Father glorified him in heaven, and *the Spirit* glorified him on earth. It was the honour of the Redeemer that *the Spirit* was both sent in his name, and sent on his errand, to carry on and perfect his undertaking. All the gifts and graces of *the Spirit*, all the preaching, and all the writing of the apostles, under the influence of *the Spirit*, tongues, and miracles, were to glorify Christ.

2. *The Spirit* glorified Christ, by leading his followers into the truth as it is in Jesus, *Eph.* iv. 21. He assures them,

(1.) That *the Spirit* should communicate the things of Christ to them; *he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you*. As in essence *he proceedeth from the Son*, so in influence and operation he derives from him. *He shall take, ἐκ τῆς ἐμοῦ, of that which is mine*. All that *the Spirit* shews us, that is, applies to us, for our instruction and comfort, all he gives us for our strength and quickening, and all he secures and seals to us, did all belong to Christ, and was had and received from him: All was his, for he bought it, and paid dear for it, and therefore he had reason to call it his own; his, for he first received it; it was given him as the head of the church, to be derived from him to all his members. *The Spirit* came not to erect a new kingdom, but to advance and establish the same kingdom that Christ had erected, to maintain the same interest, and pursue the same design; those therefore who pretend to *the Spirit*, and yet vilify Christ, give themselves the lye, for he came to glorify Christ.

(2.) That herein the things of God should be communicated to us; lest any should think that the receiving of his would not make them much the richer, he adds, *all things that the Father has, are mine*. As God, all that self-existent light, and self-sufficient happiness, which *the Father* has, he has; as Mediator, *all things are delivered to him of the Father*, *Matt.* xi. 27. all that grace and truth which God designed to shew us, he lodged it in the hands of the Lord Jesus, *Col.* i. 19. Spiritual blessings in heavenly things are given by *the Father to the Son* for us, and *the Son* intrusts *the Spirit* to convey them to us. Some apply it to that which goes just before, *he shall shew you things to come*, and so it is explained by *Rev.* i. 1. God gave it to Christ, and he signified it to John, who wrote what *the Spirit* said, *Rev.* i. 1.

16. A little while and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. 17. Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? 18. They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 19. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among your selves of that I said, A little while and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while and ye shall see me? 20. Verily, verily I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. 21. A woman when she is in travel, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembreth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. 22. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Our Lord Jesus for the comfort of his sorrowful disciples, here promisseth that he would visit them again.

First, Observe the intimation he gave them of this comfort he designed them, *ver.* 16. Here he tells them,

1. That they should now shortly lose the sight of him: *A little while, and ye that have seen me so long, and still desire to see me, shall not see me*; and therefore if they had any good question to ask him, they must ask quickly, for he was now taking his leave of them. Note, It is good to consider how near to a period our seasons of grace are, that we may be quickened to improve them while they are continued. Now our eyes see our teachers, see the days of *the Son of man*, but, perhaps, yet a little while, and we shall not see them. They lost the sight of Christ, 1. At his death, when he withdrew from this world, and never after shewed himself openly in it. The most that death doth to our Christian

friends, is to take them out of our sight, not out of being, not out of bliss, not out of all relation to us, only out of sight, and then not out of mind. 2. At his ascension, when he withdrew from them, who, after his resurrection, had for some time conversed with him, *but of their sight, a cloud received him*, and, though they looked up stedfastly after him, *they saw him no more*, *Acts* i. 9, 10. 2 *Kings* ii. 12. See 2 *Cor.* v. 16.

2. That yet they should speedily recover the sight of him: *Again, a little while, and ye shall see me*, and therefore ye ought not to sorrow as those that had no hope; his farewell was not a final farewell, they should see him again; 1. At his resurrection, soon after his death, when he shewed himself alive, by many infallible proofs, and this in a very little while, not forty hours: See *Hos.* vi. 2. 2. By the pouring out of *the Spirit*, soon after his ascension, which scattered the mists of ignorance, and mistakes, they were almost lost in, and gave them a much clearer insight into the mysteries of Christ's gospel, than they had yet had: *The Spirit's* coming was Christ's visit to his disciples, not a transient, but a permanent one, and such a visit as abundantly retrieved the sight of him. 3. At his second coming: They saw him again as they removed one by one to him at death, and they shall all see him together at the end of time, when he shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall see him. It might be truly said of this, it was but a little while, and they should see him; for what are the days of time, to the days of eternity? 2 *Pet.* iii. 8, 9.

The reason given is, *Because I go to the Father*, and therefore, 1. I must leave you for a time, because my business calls me to the upper world, and you must be content to want me, for really my business is yours: 2. Therefore you shall see me again shortly, for the Father will not detain me to your prejudice: If I go upon your errand, you shall see me again, as soon as my business is done, as soon as is convenient. It should seem, all this refers rather to his going away at death, and return at his resurrection, than his going away at his ascension, and his return at the end of time; for it was his death that was their grief, not his ascension, *Luke* xxiv. 52. And betwixt his death and resurrection it was indeed a little while. And it may be read, not, yet a little while, it is not *ἐν μικρῷ*, as it is *John* xii. 35. but *μικρῷ*, for a little while ye shall not see me, viz. the three days of his lying in the grave; and again, for a little while ye shall see me, viz. the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. Thus we may say of our ministers and Christian friends, yet a little while and we shall not see them; either they must leave us, or we leave them, but it is certain we must part shortly, and yet not part for ever: It is but a good night to them, whom we hope to see with joy in the morning.

Secondly, The perplexity of the disciples upon the intimation given them, they were at a loss what to make of it, *ver.* 17, 18. Some of them said, softly, among themselves, either some of the weakest, that were least able, or some of the most inquisitive, that were most desirous, to understand him, *What is this that he saith to us?* Though Christ had oft spoken to this purpose before, yet still they were in the dark; though precept be upon precept, it is in vain, unless God give the understanding. Now see here,

(1.) The disciples weakness, in that they could not understand so plain a saying which Christ had already given them a key to, having told them so often in plain terms that he should be killed, and the third day rise again; yet, say they, *We cannot tell what he saith*; for, 1. Sorrow had filled their heart, and made them unapt to receive the impressions of comfort: The darkness of ignorance, and the darkness of melancholy, commonly increase and thicken one another; mistakes cause griefs, and then griefs confirm mistakes. 2. The notion of Christ's secular kingdom was so deeply rooted in them, that they could make no sense at all of those sayings of his, which they knew not how to reconcile with that notion. When we think the scripture must be made to agree with the false ideas we have imbibed, no wonder we complain of its difficulty; but when our reasonings are captivated to revelation, the matter becomes easy. 3. It should seem, that which puzzled them, was *the little while*: If he must go at last, yet they could not conceive how he should leave them quickly, when his stay hitherto had been so short; and so little while, comparatively. Thus it is hard for us to represent to ourselves that change as near, which yet we know will come certainly, and may come suddenly. When we are told, yet a little while, and we must go hence; yet a little while, and we must give up our account; we know not how to digest it; for we always took the vision to be for a great while to come, *Ezek.* xii. 27.

(2.) Their willingness to be instructed: When they were at a loss about the meaning of Christ's words, they conferred together upon it, and asked help of one another: By mutual converse about divine things, we both borrow others light, and improve our own. Observe how exactly they repeat Christ's words. Though we cannot fully solve every difficulty we meet with in scripture, yet we must not therefore throw it by, but revolve what we cannot explain, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto us.

Thirdly, The further explication of what Christ had said.

1. See here why Christ explained it, *ver.* 19. because he knew they were desirous to ask him, and designed it. Note, The knots we cannot untie, we must bring to him who alone can give an understanding: Christ knew they were desirous to ask him, but were bashful and ashamed to ask. Note, Christ takes cognizance of pious desires,



desires, though they be not as yet offered up, the *groanings that cannot be uttered*, and even *prevents them with the blessings of his goodness*. Christ instructed those who he *knew were desirous to ask him*, though they did not ask: *Before we call, he answers*.

Another reason why Christ explained it was, because he observed them canvassing this matter *among themselves*: *Do ye enquire this among your selves?* Well, I will make it easy to you. This intimates to us, who they are that Christ will teach: 1. The humble, that confess their ignorance, for so much their enquiry implied. 2. The diligent, that use the means they have: *Do ye enquire?* You shall be taught: *To him that hath, shall be given*.

2. See here how he explained it, not by a nice and critical descant upon the words, but by bringing the thing more closely to them; he had told them of *not seeing him, and seeing him*, and they did not apprehend that, and therefore he explains it by their sorrowing and rejoicing, because we commonly measure things according as they affect us, *ver. 20. Ye shall weep and lament*, for my departure, *but the world shall rejoice in it; and ye shall be sorrowful*, while I am absent, *but, upon my return to you, your sorrow will be turned into joy*: But he saith nothing of *the little while*, because he saw that perplexed them more than any thing; and it is no matter for our knowing *the times and the seasons*. Note, Believers have joy or sorrow, according as they have, or have not, a sight of Christ, and the tokens of his presence with them.

What Christ saith here, and *ver. 21, 22.* of their sorrow and joy,

(1.) Is primarily to be understood of the present state and circumstances of the disciples, and so we have,

1. Their grief foretold; *Ye shall weep and lament, and ye shall be sorrowful*. The sufferings of Christ could not but be the sorrow of his disciples, they wept for him because they loved him; the pain of our friend is a pain to ourselves; when they slept it was for sorrow, *Luke xxii. 45.* They wept for *themselves*, and their own loss, and the sad apprehensions they had what would become of them when he was gone. It could not but be a grief to lose him, for whom they had left their all, and from whom they expected so much. Christ has given notice to his disciples beforehand to expect sorrow, that they may treasure up comforts accordingly.

2. The world's rejoicing at the same time; — *But the world shall rejoice*. That which is the grief of saints, is the joy of sinners. (1.) They that are *strangers to Christ*, will continue in their carnal mirth, and not at all interest themselves in their sorrows: *It is nothing to them that pass by*, *Lam. i. 12.* Nay, (2.) They that are *enemies to Christ*, will therefore rejoice, because they hope they have conquered him and ruined his interest. When the chief priests had Christ upon the cross, we may suppose they made merry over him, as they that dwell on earth over the slain witnesses, *Rev. xi. 10.* Let it be no surprize to us if we see others triumphing, when we are *trembling for the ark*.

3. The return of joy to them in due time; *But your sorrow shall be turned into joy*. As the joy of the hypocrite, so the sorrow of the true Christian, is *but for a moment*. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. His resurrection was *life from the dead* to them, and their sorrow for Christ's sufferings was turned into joy, of such a nature as could not be damp and embittered by any sufferings of their own: They were *sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing*, *2 Cor. vi. 10.* had sorrowful lives, and yet joyful hearts.

(2.) It is applicable to all the faithful followers of the Lamb, and describes the common case of Christians.

1. Their condition and disposition are both mournful; sorrows are their lot, and seriousness is their temper; they that are acquainted with Christ, must, as he was, be *acquainted with grief*: They *weep and lament* for that which others make light of, their own sins, and the sins of those about them: They mourn with sufferers that mourn, and mourn for sinners that mourn not for themselves.

2. The world, at the same time, goes away with all the mirth; they laugh now, and spend their days so jovially, that one would think they neither knew sorrow, nor feared it. Carnal mirth and pleasures are surely none of the best things, for then the worst men would not have so large a share of them, and the favourites of heaven be such strangers to them.

3. Spiritual mourning will shortly be turned into eternal rejoicing: *Gladness is sown for the upright in heart, that sow in tears*, and, without doubt, *they shall shortly reap in joy*: Their sorrow will not only be followed with joy, but *turned into it*; for the most precious comforts take rise from pious griefs.

This he illustrates by a similitude taken from a woman in travel, to whose sorrows he compares those of his disciples, for their encouragement; for it is the will of Christ that his people should be a comforted people.

1. Here is the similitude or parable itself, *ver. 21. A woman, we know, when she is in travel, hath sorrow*, she is in exquisite pain, *because her hour is come*, the hour which nature and providence have fixed, which she hath expected, and cannot escape; *but as soon as she is delivered of the child*, provided she be safely delivered, and the child be, though a Jabez, (*1 Chron. iv. 9.*) yet not a Benoni, (*Gen. xxxv. 18.*) then *she remembers no more the anguish*, her groans and complaints are all over, and the after-pains

are easier borne, *for joy that a man is born into the world*, *αὐθαρμίας*, one of the human race, a child, be it son or daughter, for the word speaks either. Observe,

(1.) The fruit of the curse, in the sorrow and pain of a woman in travel, according to the sentence, *Gen. iii. 16. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth*. These pains are extream, the greatest griefs and pains are compared to them, *Psal. xlviii. 6. Isa. xiii. 8.—xxi. 3. Jer. iv. 31.—vi. 24.* and they are inevitable, *1 Thess. v. 3.* See what this world is, all its roses are surrounded with thorns; all the children of men are upon this account *foolish children*, that they are the heaviness of her that bore them from the very first: This comes of sin.

(2.) The fruit of the blessing, in the joy that is for a child born into the world. If God had not preserved the blessing in force after the fall, *Be fruitful and multiply*, parents could never have looked upon their children with any comfort; but what is the fruit of a blessing, is matter of joy; the birth of a living child is, 1. The parents joy, it *makes them very glad*, *Jer. xx. 15.* Though children are certain cares, uncertain comforts, and oft prove the greatest crosses, yet it is natural to us to rejoice in their birth, Could we be sure that our children, like John, should be *filled with the holy Ghost*, we might, indeed, like his parents, have joy and gladness in their birth, *Luke i. 14, 15.* But when we consider, not only that they are born in sin, but, as it is here expressed, *they are born into the world*, a world of snares, and a vale of tears, we shall see reason to rejoice with trembling, lest it should prove better for them they had never been born.

2. It is such joy as makes the anguish not to be remembered, or remembered as waters that pass away, *Job xi. 16. Hoc olim meminisse juvabit*, *Gen. xli. 51.* Now this is very proper to set forth,

(1.) The sorrows of Christ's disciples in this world, they are like travelling pains, sure and sharp, but not to last long, and in order to a joyful product; they are in *pain to be delivered*, as the church is described, *Rev. xii. 2.* and the whole creation, *Rom. viii. 22.* And, (2.) Their joys after these sorrows, which will wipe away all tears, for the former things are passed away, *Rev. xxi. 4.* When they are born into that blessed world, and reap the fruit of all their services and sorrows, the toil and anguish of this world will be no more remembered, as Christ's were not, when he saw of the travel of his soul abundantly to his satisfaction, *Isa. liii. 11.*

2. The reddition of the similitude, *ver. 22. Ye now have sorrow*, and are likely to have more, *but I will see you again*, and you me, and then all will be well.

(1.) Here again he tells them of their sorrow; *Ye now therefore have sorrow*; therefore, because I am leaving you, as is intimated in the antithesis, *I will see you again*. Note, Christ's withdrawals are just cause of grief to his disciples: *If he hide his face, they cannot but be troubled*: When the sun sets, the sun-flower will hang the head: And Christ takes notice of those griefs, has a bottle for the tears, and a book for the sighs, of all gracious mourners.

(2.) He more largely than before assures them of a return of joy, *Psal. xxx. 5, 11.* He himself went through his own griefs, and bore ours, *for the joy that was set before him*; and he would have us encourage ourselves with the same prospect. Three things recommend the joy:

1. The cause of it; *I will see you again*; I will make you a kind and friendly visit, to enquire after you, and minister comfort to you. Note, 1. Christ will graciously return to those that wait for him, though *for a small moment* he has seemed to forsake them, *Isa. liv. 7.* Men, when they are preferred, will scarce look upon their inferiors, but the exalted Jesus will visit his disciples: They shall not only see him in his glory, but he will see them in their meanness. 2. Christ's returns are returns of joy to all his disciples: When clouded evidences are cleared up, interrupted communion revived, *then is the mouth filled with laughter*.

2. The cordialness of it; *Your heart shall rejoice*. Divine consolations put gladness into the heart. Joy in the heart is solid, and not flashy; secret, and that which a stranger doth not intermeddle with: It is sweet, and gives a good man satisfaction in himself; it is sure, and not easily broken in upon. Christ's disciples should heartily rejoice in his returns, sincerely, and greatly.

3. The continuance of it; *Your joy no man taketh from you*. Men will attempt to take their joy from them, they would if they could, but they shall not prevail. Some understand it of the eternal joy of them that are glorified; they that are entered into the joy of their Lord, shall go no more out: Our joys on earth we are liable to be robbed of by a thousand accidents, but heavenly joys are everlasting: But I rather understand it of the spiritual joys of those that are sanctified, particularly the apostles joy in their apostleship: *Thanks be to God*, saith Paul, in the name of the rest, *who always causeth us to triumph*, *2 Cor. ii. 14.* A malicious world would have taken it from them; if bonds and banishments, tortures and deaths, would have taken it from them, they had lost it; but when they took every thing else from them, they could not take this; *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*: They could not rob them of their joy, because they could not separate them from the love of Christ, could not rob them of their God, nor of their treasure in heaven.



23. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing: Verily, verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 25. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. 26. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

An answer to their askings is here promised, for their further comfort. Now there are two ways of asking, asking by way of enquiry, that is the asking of the ignorant; and asking by way of request, and that is the asking of the indigent: Christ here speaks of both,

First, By way of enquiry, they should not need to ask, *ver. 23.* In that day ye shall ask me nothing; *ἐκ ἐρωτήσεων ἐστέν*, ye shall ask no questions; you shall have such a clear knowledge of gospel mysteries, by the opening of your understandings, that you shall not need to enquire, as *Heb. viii. 11.* They shall not teach; you shall have more knowledge on a sudden, than hitherto you have had by diligent attendance: They had asked some ignorant questions, as *John ix. 2.* some ambitious questions, as *Matt. xviii. 1.* some distrustful ones, as *Matt. xix. 27.* some impertinent ones, as *John xxi. 21.* some curious ones, as *Acts i. 6.* but after the Spirit was poured out, nothing of all this. In the story of the apostles *Acts* we seldom find them asking questions, as David, *Shall I do this? Or, Shall I go thither?* For they were constantly under a divine conduct. In that weighty case of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, Peter went, *nothing doubting*, *Acts x. 20.* Asking questions supposeth us at a loss, or, at least, at a stand, and the best of us have need to ask questions; but we should aim at such a full assurance of understanding, as that we may not hesitate, but be constantly led in a plain path both of truth and duty.

Now for this he gives a reason, *ver. 25.* which plainly refers to this promise, that they should not need to ask questions: *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs*, in such a way as you have thought not so plain and intelligible as you could have wished, *but the time cometh, when I shall shew you plainly*, as plainly as you can desire, *of the Father*, so that you shall not need to ask questions.

1. The great thing Christ would lead them into, was the knowledge of God: *I will shew you the Father*, and bring you acquainted with him: This is that which Christ designs to give, and which all true Christians desire to have. When Christ would speak the greatest favour intended for his disciples, he tells them he would shew them plainly the Father; for what is the happiness of heaven, but immediately, and everlastingly to see God? *To know God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, is the greatest mystery for the understanding to please itself with the contemplation of; and to know him as *our Father*, is the greatest happiness for the will and affections to please themselves with the choice and enjoyment of.

2. Of this he had hitherto spoken to them in proverbs, which are wise sayings, and instructive, but figurative, and resting in generals. Christ had spoken many things very plainly to them, and expounded his parables privately to the disciples, but, 1. Considering their dulness and unaptness to receive what he said to them, he might be said to speak in proverbs; what he said to them was as a book sealed, *Isa. xxix. 11.* 2. Comparing the discoveries he had made to them, in what he had spoken to their ears, with what he would make to them, when he would put his Spirit into their hearts: All hitherto had been but proverbs: It would be a pleasing surprize to themselves, and they would think themselves in a new world when they would reflect upon all their former notions as confused and enigmatical, compared with their present clear, and distinct knowledge of divine things. *The ministration of the letter was nothing to that of the Spirit*, *2 Cor. iii. 8, 11.* 3. Confining it to what he had said of the Father, and the counsels of the Father, what he had said was very dark, compared with what was shortly to be revealed, *Col. ii. 2.*

3. He would speak to them plainly, *παρρησία*, with freedom, of the Father. When the Spirit was poured out, the apostles attained to a much greater knowledge of divine things than they had before, as appears by the utterance the Spirit gave them, *Acts ii. 4.* These things, which they had a very confused idea of before, they were led into the mystery of; and what the Spirit shewed them, Christ is here said to shew them, for as the Father speaks by the Son, so the Son by the Spirit. But this promise will have its full accomplishment in heaven, where we shall see the Father as he is, *face to face*, not as we do now, *through a glass darkly*, *1 Cor. xiii. 12.* which is matter of comfort to us under the cloud of present darkness, by reason of which we cannot order our speech, but often disorder it. While we are here we have many questions to ask concerning the invisible God, and the invisible world,

but in that day we shall see all things clearly and ask no more questions.

Secondly, He promiseth that by way of request, they should ask nothing in vain. It is taken for granted that all Christ's disciples give themselves to prayer: He had taught them by his precept and pattern to be much in prayer; that must be their support and comfort when he had left them; their instruction, direction, strength and success must be fetched in by prayer.

Now, 1. Here is an express promise of a grant, *ver. 23.* The preface to this promise is such as makes it inviolably sure, and leaves no room to question it; *Verily, verily I say unto you*, I pawn my veracity upon it: The promise itself is incomparably rich, and sweet; the golden scepter is here held out to us, with this word, *What is thy petition, and it shall be granted?* For he saith, *whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you.* We had it before, *chap. xiv. 13.* What would we more? The promise is as express as we can desire.

(1.) We are here taught how to seek; we must ask the Father in Christ's name; we must have an eye to God as a Father, and come as children to him; and to Christ as Mediator, and come as clients. Asking of the Father includes a sense of spiritual wants, and a desire of spiritual blessings, with a conviction that they are to be had from God only: As also humility of address to him, with a believing confidence in him, as a Father able and ready to help us. Asking in Christ's name includes an acknowledgment of our own unworthiness to receive any favour from God, and a complacency in the method God has taken of keeping up a correspondence with us by his Son, and an entire dependence upon Christ as the Lord our righteousness.

(2.) We are here told how we shall speed; *he will give it you.* What more can we wish for, than to have what we want, nay, to have what we will, in conformity to God's will, for the asking. He will give it you, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift. What Christ purchased by the merit of his death, he needed not for himself, but intended it for, and consigned it to his faithful followers; and having given a valuable consideration for it, which was accepted; in full by this promise he draws a bill as it were upon the treasury in heaven, which we are to present by prayer, and in his name to ask for that which is purchased and promised, according to the true intent of the new covenant. Christ had promised them great illumination by the Spirit, but they must pray for it, and did so, *Acts i. 14.* God will for this be enquired of. He had promised them perfection hereafter, but what shall they do in the mean time? They must continue prayer. Perfect fruition is reserved for the land of our rest; asking and receiving is the comfort of the land of our pilgrimage.

2. Here is an invitation to them to petition. It is thought sufficient if great men permit addressees, but Christ calls upon us to petition, *ver. 24.*

1. He looks back upon their practice hitherto, *hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name.* That refers either, 1. To the matter of their prayers. Ye have asked nothing comparatively, nothing to what you might have asked, and will ask when the Spirit is poured out. See what a generous benefactor our Lord Jesus is above all benefactors; he gives liberally, and is so far from unbraiding us with the frequency and largeness of his gifts, that he rather upbraids us with the seldomness and straitness of our requests: *You have asked nothing* in comparison of what you want, and what I have to give, and have promised to give. We are bid to open our mouth wide. Or, 2. To the name in which they prayed. They prayed many a prayer, but never so expressly in the name of Christ as now he was directing them to do; for he had not as yet offered up that great sacrifice, in the virtue of which our prayers were to be accepted, nor entered upon his intercession for us, the incense whereof was to perfume all our devotions, and so enable us to pray in his name. Hitherto they had cast out devils, and healed diseases in the name of Christ, as a king and prophet, but they could not yet distinctly pray in his name as a priest.

2. He looks forward to their practice for the future. *Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* Here, 1. He directs them to ask for all that which they needed, and he had promised. 2. He assures them that they shall receive. What we ask from a principle of grace God will graciously give: *Ye shall receive it.* There is something more in that than in the promise, that he will give it. He will not only give it, but give you to receive it, give you the comfort and benefit of it, *a heart to eat of it*, *Eccl. vi. 2.* 3. That hereby their joy shall be full. Which speaks, 1. The blessed effect of the prayer of faith, it helps to fill up the joy of faith. Would we have our joy full, as full as it is capable of being in this world, we must be much in prayer. When we are bid to rejoice evermore, it follows immediately, *pray without ceasing.* See how high we are to aim in prayer, not only at peace but joy, a fulness of joy. Or, 2. The blessed effects of the answer of peace. Ask, and ye shall receive that which will fill your joy. Christ's gifts, through Christ, fill the treasures of the soul, they fill its joys, *Prov. viii. 21.* Ask for the gift of the holy Ghost, and ye shall receive it; and whereas other knowledge increaseth sorrow, *Eccl. i. 18.* the knowledge he gives will increase, will fill your joy.

3. Here are the grounds upon which they might hope to speed, *ver. 26,*



ver. 26, 27. which are summed up in short by the apostle, 1 John ii. 1. *We have an advocate with the Father.*

1. We have an advocate, and as to that Christ saw cause at present not to insist upon it, only to make the following encouragement shine the brighter. *I say, unto you, not that I will pray the Father for you.* Suppose I should not tell you that I will intercede for you, should not undertake to solicit every particular cause you have depending there, yet it may be a general ground of comfort, that I have settled a correspondence between you and God; have erected a throne of grace, and consecrated for you a new and living way into the holiest. He speaks as if they needed not any further favours, when he had prevailed for the gift of the holy Ghost to *make intercession within them*, as a Spirit of adoption, crying *Abba Father*; as if they had no further need of him to pray for them now, but we shall find he doth more for us than he saith he will. Mens performances often come short of their promises, but Christ's go beyond them.

2. We have to do with a Father, which is so great an encouragement, that it doth in a manner supersede the other. *For the Father himself loveth you*, *φιλεῖ ὑμᾶς*, he is a friend to you, and you cannot be better befriended. Note, The disciples of Christ are the beloved of God himself. Christ not only turned away God's wrath from us, and brought us into a covenant of peace and reconciliation, but purchased his favour for us, and brought us into a covenant of friendship. Observe what an emphasis is laid upon this, the *Father himself loveth you*; who is perfectly happy in the enjoyment of himself, whose self-love is both his infinite rectitude, and his infinite blessedness, yet he is pleased to love you. The Father himself, whose favour you have forfeited, and whose wrath you have incurred, and with whom you need an advocate, he himself now loves you.

Observe, 1. Why the Father loved the disciples of Christ, *because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God*, i. e. because ye are my disciples indeed; not as if the love began on their side, but when by his grace he has wrought in us a love to him, he is well-pleased with the work of his own hands. See here, 1. What is the character of Christ's disciples; they love him, because they *believe he came out from God*, is the only begotten of the Father, and his high-commissioner to the world. Note, Faith in Christ works by love to him, Gal. v. 6. If we believe him to be the *Son of God*, we cannot but love him as infinitely lovely in himself; and if we believe him to be our Saviour, we cannot but love him as the most kind to us. Observe with what respect Christ is pleased to speak of his disciples love to him, and how kindly he took it; he speaks of it as that which recommended them to his Father's favour. Ye have loved me, and believed in me when the world has hated and rejected me; and you shall be distinguished who have thus distinguished your selves. 2. See what advantage Christ's faithful disciples have, the Father loves them, and that because they love Christ; so well pleased is he in him, that he is well pleased with all his friends.

2. What encouragement this gave them in prayer. They need not fear speeding when they came to one that loved them, and wished them well. 1. This cautions us against hard thoughts of God. When we are taught in prayer to plead Christ's merit and intercession, it is not as if all the kindness were in Christ only, and in God nothing but wrath and fury; no, the matter is not so, the Father's love and good will appointed Christ to be the mediator; so that we owe Christ's merit to God's mercy in giving him for us. 2. Let it cherish and confirm in us good thoughts of God. Believers that love Christ ought to know that God loves them, and therefore to come boldly to him as children to a loving Father.

28. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. 29. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. 30. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. 31. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 32. Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

Two things Christ here comforts his disciples with,

First, With an assurance that though he was leaving the world he was returning to his Father, from whom he came forth, ver. 28,—32. Where we have,

1. A plain declaration of Christ's mission from the Father, and his return to him, ver. 28. *I am come forth from the Father, and am come*, as you see, *into the world: Again, I leave the world*, as you will see shortly, and *go to the Father*. This is the conclusion

of the whole matter: There was nothing he had more inculcated upon them, than these two things, whence he came, and whither he went; the *Alpha and Omega* of the mystery of godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 16. That the Redeemer, in his entrance, was *God manifest in the flesh*, and, in his exit, was *received up into glory*. These two great truths are here, 1. Contracted, and put into a few words. Brief summaries of Christian doctrine are of great use to young beginners. The principles of the oracles of God brought into a little compass in creeds and catechisms, have, like the beams of the sun contracted in a burning glass, conveyed divine light and heat with a wonderful power. Such we have, Job xxviii. 28. Eccl. xii. 13. 1 Tim. i. 15. Tit. ii. 11, 12. 1 John v. 11. much in a little. 2. Compared and set the one over against the other. There is an admirable harmony in divine truths; they do both corroborate and illustrate one another; Christ's coming and his going do so; Christ had commended his disciples for believing that he *came forth from God*, ver. 27. and from thence infers the necessity and equity of his returning to God again, which therefore should not seem to them either strange or sad. Note, The due improvement of what we know and own would help us into the understanding of that which seems difficult and doubtful.

If we ask concerning the Redeemer, *whence he came*, and *whither he went*, we are here told,

1. That he *came forth from the Father*, who sanctified and sealed him; and he came into this world, this lower world, this world of mankind, among whom by his incarnation he was pleased to incorporate himself: Here his business lay, and hither he came to attend it. He left his home for this strange country; his palace for this cottage; wonderful condescension!

2. That when he had done his work on earth, he left the world, and went back to his Father at his ascension. He was not forced away, but made it his own act and deed to *leave the world*, to return to it no more till he comes to put an end to it; yet still he is spiritually present with his church, and will be to the end.

3. The disciples satisfaction in this declaration, ver. 29, 30. *Lo, now speakest thou plainly*. It should seem this one word of Christ did them more good than all the rest, though he had said many things likely enough to fasten upon them. The Spirit, as the wind, blows when and where, and by what word he pleaseth; perhaps a word that has been *spoken once, yea twice*, and not perceived, yet being often repeated takes hold at last.

Two things they improved in by this saying,

1. In knowledge: *Lo, now speakest thou plainly*. When they were in the dark concerning what he said, they did not say, *Lo, now speakest thou obscurely*, as blaming him; but now they apprehend his meaning, they give him glory for condescending to their capacity, *Lo, now speakest thou plainly*. Divine truths are then most likely to do good when they are spoken plainly, 1 Cor. ii. 4. Observe how they triumphed, as the mathematician did with his *εὐρηκα, εὐρηκα*, when he had lit upon a demonstration he had long been in quest of, *I have found it, I have found it*. Note, When Christ is pleased to speak plainly to our souls, and to bring us with open face to behold the glory, we have reason to rejoice in it.

2. In faith: *Now are we sure*. Observe,

1. What was the matter of their faith, *we believe that thou camest forth from God*. He had said, ver. 27. that they did believe this, Lord (say they) we do believe it, and we have cause to believe it, and we know that we believe it, and have the comfort of it.

2. What was the motive of their faith, his omniscience. This proved him a teacher come from God, and more than a prophet, that he *knew all things*, which they were convinced of by this, that he resolved those doubts which were hid in their hearts, and answered the scruples they had not confessed. Note, Those know Christ best that know him by experience; that can say of his power, *it works in me*; of his love, that he *loved me*. And this proves Christ not only to have a divine mission, but to be a divine person; that he is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, therefore the essential, eternal Word, Heb. iv. 12, 13. He has made all the churches to know that he searcheth the reins and the heart, Rev. ii. 23. This confirmed the faith of the disciples here, as it made the first impression upon the woman of Samaria, that Christ *told her all things that ever she did*, John iv. 29. and upon Nathanael, that Christ *saw him under the fig-tree*, John i. 49.

These words, *And needest not that any man should ask thee*, may speak either, 1. Christ's aptness to teach. He prevents us with his instructions, and is communicative of the *treasures of wisdom and knowledge* that are hid in him, and needs not be importuned. Or, 2. His ability to teach. Thou needest not, as other teachers, to have the learners doubts told thee, for thou knowest without being told what they stumble at. The best of teachers can only answer what is spoken, but Christ can answer what is thought, what we are afraid to ask, as the disciples were, Mark ix. 32. Thus he can have compassion, Heb. v. 2.

3. The gentle rebuke Christ gave the disciples for their confidence, that they now understood him, ver. 31, 32. observing how they triumphed in their attainments, he said, *do ye now believe?*

Do



Do ye now look upon your selves as advanced and confirmed disciples? Do ye now think you shall make no more blunders? Alas, ye know not your own weakness; you will very shortly be scattered every man to his own, &c. Here we have,

1. A question designed to put them upon consideration, *do ye now believe?* 1. If now, why not sooner? Have ye not heard the same things many a time before? They who after many instructions and invitations are at last persuaded to believe, have reason to be ashamed that they stood it out so long. 2. If now, why not ever? When an hour of temptation comes, where will your faith be then? As far as there is inconstancy in our faith, there is cause to question the sincerity of it, and to ask, do we indeed believe?

2. A prediction of their fall; that how confident soever they were now of their own stability, in a little time they would all desert him; which was fulfilled that very night, when upon his being seized by a party of the guards, *all his disciples forsook him and fled*, Mat. xxvi. 56. They were scattered, 1. From one another, they shifted every one for his own safety, without any care or concern for each other. Troublous times are times of scattering to Christian societies; in the cloudy and dark day the flock of Christ is dispersed, *Ezek. xxxix. 12.* so Christ as a society is not visible. 2. Scattered from him; *ye shall leave me alone.* They should have been witnesses for him upon his trial, should have ministered to him in his sufferings; if they could have given him no comfort, they might have done him some credit; but they were ashamed of his chain, and afraid of sharing with him in his sufferings, and left him alone. Note, Many a good cause, when it is distressed by its enemies, is deserted by its friends. The disciples had continued with Christ in his other temptations, and yet turned their back upon him now; those that are tried, do not always prove trusty. If we at any time find our friends unkind to us, let us remember that Christ's were so to him.

When they left him alone, they were scattered every man to his own; not to their own possessions or habitations, those were in Galilee, but to their own friends and acquaintance in Jerusalem; every one went his own way, where he fancied he should be most safe. Every man to secure his own; *i. e.* himself and his own life. Note, Those will not dare to suffer for their religion that seek their own things, more than the things of Christ, and that look upon the things of this world as their *ταῖς ἰδίαις*, their own propriety, and in which their happiness is bound up. Now observe here,

1. Christ knew before, that his disciples would thus desert him in the critical moment, and yet he was still tender of them, and in nothing unkind. We are ready to say of some, if we could have foreseen their ingratitude, we would not have been so prodigal of our favours to them; Christ did foresee theirs, and yet was kind to them.

2. He told them of it to be a rebuke to their exultation, in their present attainments. *Do ye now believe?* Be not high-minded, but fear; for you will find your faith so sorely shaken, as to make it questionable whether it be sincere or no in a little time. Note, Even then when we are taking the comfort of our graces, it is good to be minded of our danger from our corruptions. When our faith is strong, our love flaming, and evidences clear, yet we cannot infer from thence, that *to-morrow shall be as this day*. Even then when we have most reason to think we stand, yet we have reason enough to take heed lest we fall.

3. He spoke of it as a thing very near. *The hour was already come*, in a manner, when they would be as shy of him, as ever they had been fond of him. Note, A little time may produce great changes, both concerning us, and in us.

3. An assurance of his own comfort notwithstanding; yet *I am not alone*. He would not be thought to complain of their deserting him, as if it were any real damage to him, for in their absence he should be sure of his Father's presence, which was *intra omnia*, the Father is with me. We may consider this,

1. As a privilege peculiar to the Lord Jesus; the Father was so with him in his sufferings as he never was with any, for still he was *in the bosom of the Father*. The divine nature did not desert the human nature, but supported it, and put an invincible comfort, and an inestimable value into his sufferings. The Father had engaged to be with him in his whole undertaking, *Psal. lxxxix. 21.* &c. and to preserve him, *Isa. xlix. 8.* and this emboldened him, *Isa. l. 7.* then when he complained of his Father's forsaking him, yet he called him *my God*, and presently after, was so well assured of his favourable presence with him, as to commit his Spirit into his hand. This he had comforted himself with all along, *John viii. 29.* *He that sent me is with me, the Father hath not left me alone*, and especially now at last. This affirms our faith in the acceptableness of Christ's satisfaction; no doubt the Father was well pleased in him, for he went along with him in his undertaking from first to last.

2. As a privilege common to all believers; by virtue of their union with Christ, when they are alone, they are not alone, but the Father is with them. 1. When solitude is their choice, when they are alone, as Isaac in the field, Nathanael under the fig-tree, Peter upon the house-top meditating and praying, the Father is with them. They that converse with God in solitude, are never

less alone, than when alone. A good God, and a good heart, are good company at any time. 2. When solitude is their affliction, their enemies lay them alone, and their friends leave them so; their company, like Job's, is made desolate, yet they are not so much alone as they are thought to be, *the Father is with them*, as he was with Joseph in his bonds, and with John in his banishment. In their greatest troubles they are as one whom his father pities, as one whom his mother comforts. And while we have God's favourable presence with us, we are happy, and ought to be easy, though all the world forsake us. *Non Deo tribuimus justum honorem, nisi solus ipse nobis sufficiat.* Calvin.

Secondly, He comforts them with a promise of peace in him, by virtue of his victory over the world, whatever troubles they might meet with in it, *ver. 33.* *These things I have spoken, that in me ye might have peace*, and if ye have it not in me, ye will not have it at all, for *in the world ye shall have tribulation*, you must expect no other, and yet may cheer up your selves, for *I have overcome the world*. Observe,

1. The end Christ aimed at in preaching this farewell sermon to his disciples; *that in him they might have peace*. He did not hereby intend to give them a full view of that doctrine which they were shortly to be made masters of, by the pouring out of the Spirit, but only to satisfy them for the present, that his departure from them was really for the best. Or we may take it more generally, Christ had said all this to them, that by enjoying him, they might have the best enjoyment of themselves. Note, 1. It is the will of Christ, that his disciples should have peace within, whatever their troubles may be without. 2. Peace in Christ is the only true peace, and in him alone believers have it, for *this man shall be the peace*, Mic. v. 5. *Through him we have peace with God*, and so in him we have peace in our own minds. 3. The word of Christ aims at this, *that in him we may have peace*. Peace is the fruit of the lips, of his lips, *Isa. lvii. 19.*

2. The entertainment they were likely to meet with in the world. You shall not have outward peace, never expect it; though they were sent to proclaim *peace on earth*, and *good will towards men*, they must expect trouble on earth, and ill will from men. Note, It has been the lot of Christ's disciples to have more or less tribulation in this world. Men persecute them because they are so good, and God corrects them because they are no better. Men design to cut them off from the earth, and God designs by affliction to make them meet for heaven, and so between both *they shall have tribulation*.

3. The encouragement Christ gives them, with reference hereunto; *but be of good cheer*, *Θαράσῃτε*, not only be of good comfort, but be of good courage; have a good heart on it, all shall be well. Note, In the midst of the tribulations of this world, it is the duty and interest of Christ's disciples to be of good cheer, to keep up their delight in God, whatever is pressing, and their hope in God, whatever is threatening; as sorrowful indeed in compliance with the temper of the climate, and yet always rejoicing, always cheerful, *2 Cor. vi. 10.* *even in tribulation*, *Rom. v. 3.*

4. The ground of that encouragement, *I have overcome the world*. Christ's victory is a Christian's triumph. Christ overcame the prince of this world, disarmed him, and cast him out; and still treads Satan under our feet. He overcame the children of this world, by the conversion of many to the faith and obedience of his gospel, making them the children of his kingdom. When he sends his disciples to preach the gospel to all the world, *be of good cheer*, saith he, *I have overcome the world*, as far as I have gone, and so shall you; though you have tribulation in the world, yet you shall gain your point, and captivate the world, *Rev. vi. 2.* He overcame the wicked of the world, for many a time he put his enemies to silence, to shame; and be you of good cheer, for the Spirit will enable you to do so too. He overcame the evil things of the world, by submitting to them; he endured the cross, despising it, and the shame of it; and the good things of it, by being wholly dead to them; its honours had no beauty in his eye, its pleasures no charms. Never was there such a conqueror of the world as Christ was; and we ought to be encouraged by it; 1. Because Christ has overcome the world before us; so that we may look upon it as a conquered enemy, that has many a time been baffled. Nay, 2. He has conquered it for us, as the captain of our salvation; we are interested in his victory; by his cross the world is crucified to us, which speaks it completely conquered, and put into our possession; all is yours, even the world. Christ having overcome the world, believers have nothing to do but to pursue their victory, and divide the spoil; and this we do by faith, *1 John v. 4.* *We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

#### C H A P. XVII.

This chapter is a prayer, it is the Lord's prayer, the Lord Christ's prayer. There was one Lord's prayer, which he taught us to pray, and did not pray himself, for he needed not to pray for the forgiveness of sin; but this was properly and peculiarly his, and suited him only as Mediator, and is a sampler of his intercession, and yet is of use to us both for instruction and encouragement in prayer. Observe, (1.) The circumstances of the prayer, *ver. 1.* (2.) The prayer



prayer it self. (1.) He prays for himself, ver. 1.—5. (2.) He prays for those that are his. And there see, (1.) The general pleas with which he introduceth his petitions for them, ver. 6.—10. (2.) The particular petitions he puts up for them, (1.) That they might be kept, ver. 11.—16. (2.) That they might be sanctified, ver. 17.—19. (3.) That they might be united, ver. 21. and ver. 26.—23. (4.) That they might be glorified, ver. 24.—26.

1. These words spake Jesus; and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3. And this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. 4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Here is, (1.) The circumstances of this prayer, ver. 1. Many a solemn prayer Christ made in the days of his flesh, sometimes he continued all night in prayer. But none of his prayers are recorded so fully as this. Observe,

1. The time when he prayed this prayer; when he had spoken these words, had given the foregoing farewell to his disciples, he prayed this prayer, in their hearing; so that,

1. It was a prayer after sermon; when he had spoken from God to them, he turned to speak to God for them. Note, Those we preach to we must pray for. He that uses to prophesy upon the dry bones, was also to pray, Come, O breath, and breathe upon them. And the word preached should be prayed over, for God gives the increase.

2. It was a prayer after sacrament; after Christ and his disciples had eaten the passover, and the Lord's supper together, and he had given them a suitable exhortation, he closed the solemnity with this prayer; that God would preserve the good impressions of the ordinance upon them.

3. It was a family prayer. Christ's disciples were his family, and to set a good example before masters of families, he not only as a son of Abraham taught his household, Gen. xviii. 19. but as a son of David, blessed his household, 2 Sam. vi. 20. prayed for them, and with them.

4. It was a parting prayer; when we and our friends are parting, it is good to part with prayer, Acts xx. 36. Christ was parting by death, and that parting should be sanctified and sweetened by prayer. Dying Jacob blessed the twelve patriarchs, dying Moses the twelve tribes, and so here, dying Jesus the twelve apostles.

5. It was a prayer that was a preface to his sacrifice he was now about to offer on earth, specifying the favours and blessings designed to be purchased by the merit of his death, for those that were his, like a deed leading the uses of a fine, and directing to what intents and purposes it shall be levied. Christ prayed then, as a priest now offering sacrifice, in the virtue of which all prayers were to be made.

6. It was a prayer that was a specimen of his intercession, which he ever lives to make for us within the veil. Not that in his exalted state he addresseth himself to his Father by way of humble petition, as when he was on earth. No, his intercession in heaven is a presenting of his merit to his Father, with a suing out of the benefit of it for all his chosen ones.

2. The outward expression of fervent desire which he used in this prayer, he lift up his eyes to heaven, as before, John xi. 41. not that Christ needed thus to engage his own intention, but he was pleased thus to sanctify this gesture to those that use it, and justify it against those that ridicule it. It is significant of the lifting up of the soul to God in prayer, Psal. xxv. 1. Sursum corda, was antiently used as a call to prayer, up with your hearts; up to heaven; thither we must direct our desires in prayer, and thence we must expect to receive the good things we pray for.

(2.) The first part of the prayer it self, in which Christ prays for himself. Observe here,

1. He prays to God as a Father. He lift up his eyes, and said, Father. Note, As prayer is to be made to God only, so it is our duty in prayer to eye him as a Father, and to call him our Father. All that have the Spirit of adoption, are taught to cry, Abba Father, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. If God be our Father, we have liberty of access to him, ground of confidence in him, and great expectations from him. Christ calls him here, holy Father, ver. 11. and righteous Father, ver. 25. For it will be of great use to us in prayer, both for direction and for encouragement, to call God, as we hope to find him.

2. He prayed for himself first; though Christ as God was prayed to, Christ as man prayed; thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness. It was said to him, as it is said to us, ask, and I will give thee, Psal. ii. 8. What he had purchased, he must ask for,

and shall we expect to have what we never merited, but have a thousand times forfeited, unless we pray for it? This puts an honour upon prayer, that it was the messenger Christ sent on his errands; the way in which even he corresponded with heaven. It likewise gives great encouragement to praying people, and cause to hope that even the prayer of the destitute shall not be despised; time was, when he that is advocate for us, had a cause of his own to solicit, a great cause, on the success of which depended all his honour as Mediator, and this he was to solicit in the same method that is prescribed to us, by prayers and supplications, Heb. v. 7. so that he knows the heart of a petitioner, Exod. xxiii. 9. he knows the way. Now observe,

1. Christ began with prayer for himself, and afterwards prayed for his disciples; this charity must begin at home, though it must not end there. We must love and pray for our neighbour as ourselves, and therefore must in a right manner love and pray for ourselves first.

2. He was much shorter in his prayer for himself, than in his prayer for his disciples. Our prayers for the church must not be crowded into a corner of our prayers; in making supplication for all saints, we have room enough to enlarge, and should not straiten ourselves.

Now here are two petitions which Christ puts up for himself, and they two are one, that he might be glorified. But this one petition, glorify thou me, is twice put up, because it has a double reference. 1. To the prosecution of his undertaking further, glorify me, that I may glorify thee, in doing what is agreed upon, to be yet done, ver. 1, 2, 3. And, 2. To the performance of his undertaking hitherto, glorify me, for I have glorified thee. I have done my part, and now, Lord, do thine, ver. 4, 5.

First, Christ here prays to be glorified, in order to his glorifying God, ver. 1. Glorify thy Son, according to thy promise, that thy Son may glorify thee, according to his undertaking. Here observe,

1. What he prays for, that he might be glorified in this world, The hour is come, when all the powers of darkness will continue to vilify thy Son, now, Father, glorify him. The Father glorified the Son upon earth, 1. Even in his sufferings, by the signs and wonders which attended them. When they that came to take him were thunder-struck with a word, when Judas confessed him innocent, and sealed that confession with his own guilty blood; when the judge's wife asleep, and the judge himself awake, pronounced him righteous; when the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent, then the Father not only justified, but glorified the Son. Nay, 2. Even by his sufferings; when he was crucified, he was magnified, he was glorified, John xiii. 31. It was in his cross that he conquered Satan and death; his thorns were a crown, and Pilate in the inscription over his head, wrote more than he thought. But, 3. Much more after his sufferings; the Father glorified the Son when he raised him from the dead, shewed him openly to chosen witnesses, and poured out the Spirit to support and plead his cause, and set up his kingdom among men, then he glorified him. This he here prays for, and insists upon.

2. What he pleads to enforce this request.

1. He pleads relations; glorify thy Son; thy Son as God, as Mediator. It is in consideration of this, that the heathen are given him for his inheritance, for thou art my Son, Psal. ii. 7, 8. The devil had tempted him to renounce his sonship, with an offer of the kingdoms of this world, but he rejected it with disdain, and depended upon his Father for his preferment, and here applies himself to him for it. Note, They that have received the adoption of sons, may in faith pray for the inheritance of sons, if sanctified, then glorified; Father, glorify thy Son.

2. He pleads the time. The hour is come; the season prefixed to an hour. The hour of Christ's passion was determined, in the counsel of God. He had often said, his hour was not yet come; but now it was come, and he knew it. Man knows not his time, Eccl. ix. 12. but the Son of man did. He calls it this hour, John xii. 27. and here the hour, compare Mark xiv. 35. John xvi. 21. for the hour of the Redeemer's death, which was also the hour of the Redeemer's birth, was the most signal and remarkable hour, and, without doubt, the most critical that ever was, since the clock of time was first set a going. Never was there such an hour as that, nor did ever any hour challenge such expectations of it before, nor such reflexions upon it after.

(1.) The hour is come, in the midst of which I need to be owned; now is the hour, when this grand affair is come to a crisis; after many a skirmish, the decisive battle between heaven and hell is now to be fought, and that great cause, in which God's honour and man's happiness are together embarked, must now be either won or lost for ever: The two champions, David and Goliath, Michael and the dragon, are now entering the lists, the trumpet sounds for an engagement, that will be irretrievably fatal either to the one, or to the other; now glorify thy Son, now give him victory over principalities and powers; now let the bruising of his heel be the breaking of the serpent's head; now let thy Son be so upheld, as not to fail or be discouraged. When Joshua went forth conquering, and to conquer, it is said, the Lord magnified Joshua; so he glorified his Son, when he made the cross his triumphant chariot.

(2.) The



(2.) *The hour is come*, in the close of which I expect to be crowned; *the hour is come*, when I am to be glorified, and set at thy right hand; betwixt him and that glory there intervened a bloody scene of suffering, but, being short, he speaks as if he made little of it; *the hour is come, that I must be glorified*; and he did not expect it till then. Good Christians, in a trying hour, particularly a dying hour, may thus plead; *now the hour is come*, stand by me, appear for me, now or never; *now the earthly tabernacle is to be dissolved, the hour is come, that I should be glorified*, 2 Cor. v. 1.

3. He pleads the Father's own interest and concern herein, *that thy Son also may glorify thee*; for he had consecrated his whole undertaking to his Father's honour; he desired to be carried triumphantly through his sufferings to his glory, that he might glorify the Father two ways, 1. By the death of the cross, which he was now to suffer; *Father, glorify thy name*, expressed the great intention of his sufferings, which was to retrieve his Father's injured honour among men, and, by his satisfaction, to come up to the glory of God, which man, by his sin, came short of. *Father, own me in my sufferings, that I may honour thee by them*. 2. By the doctrine of the cross, which was now shortly to be published to the world, by which God's kingdom was to be re-established among men: He prays that his Father would so grace his sufferings, and crown them, as not only to take off the offence of the cross, but to make it to them that are saved, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. If God had not glorified Christ crucified, by raising him from the dead, his whole undertaking had been crushed; therefore glorify me, that I may glorify thee.

Now hereby he hath taught us, 1. What to eye and aim at in our prayers, in all our designs and desires, and that is the honour of God: It being our chief end to glorify God, other things must be fought and attended to in subordination and subserviency to the Lord; do this and the other for thy servant, that thy servant may glorify thee: Give me health that I may glorify thee with my body; success, that I may glorify thee with my estate, &c. *Hallowed be thy name*, must be our first petition, which must fix our end in all our other petitions, 1 Pet. iv. 11. 2. He hath taught us what to expect and hope for: If we sincerely set ourselves to glorify our Father, he will not be wanting to do that for us which is requisite to put us into a capacity of glorifying him, to give us the grace he knows sufficient, and the opportunity he sees convenient: But if we secretly honour ourselves more than him, it is just with him to leave us in the hand of our own counsels, and then, instead of honouring ourselves, we shall shame ourselves.

4. He pleads his commission, ver. 2, 3. he desires to glorify his Father in conformity to, and in pursuance of, the commission given him: *Glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power; glorify him in the execution of the powers thou hast given him*; so it is connected with the petition; or, *that thy Son may glorify thee*, according to the power given him; so it is connected with the plea. Now see here the power of the mediator:

(1.) The original of his power: *Thou hast given him power*; he has it from God, to whom all power belongs. Man, in his fallen state, must, in order to his recovery, be taken under a new model of government, which could not be erected but by a special commission under the broad seal of heaven, directed to the undertaker of that glorious work, and constituting him sole arbitrator of the grand difference that was, and sole guarantee of the grand alliance that was to be between God and man, so as to this office, he received his power, which was to be executed in a way distinct from his power and government as Creator. Note, The church's King is no usurper, as the prince of this world is; Christ's right to rule is uncontestable.

(2.) The extent of his power: *He has power over all flesh*:

1. Over all mankind. *He has power in and over the world of spirits*, the powers of the upper and unseen world are subject to him, 1 Pet. iii. 22. but being now mediating between God and man, he here pleads his power over all flesh: They were men whom he was to subdue and save, out of that race he had a remnant given him, and therefore all that rank of beings was put under his feet.

2. Over mankind, considered as corrupt and fallen, for so he is called flesh, Gen. vi. 3. If he had not in this sense been flesh, he had not needed a redeemer. Over this sinful race the Lord Jesus has all power, and all judgment, concerning them, is committed to him; power to bind or loose, acquit or condemn; power on earth to forgive sins, or not. Christ, as mediator, has the government of the whole world put into his hand, he is King of nations, has power even over those that know him not, nor obey his gospel; whom he doth not rule, he over-rules, Psalm xxii. 28.—lxxii. 8. Matt. xxviii. 18. John v. 35.

(3.) The grand intention and design of this power, *that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*. Here is the mystery of our salvation laid open:

1. Here is the Father making over the elect to the Redeemer, and giving them to him as his charge and trust, as the crown and recompence of his undertaking: He has a sovereign power over all the fallen race, but a peculiar interest in the chosen remnant; all things were put under his feet, but they were delivered into his hand.

2. Here is the Son undertaking to secure the happiness of those that were given him, that he should give eternal life to them. See how great the authority of the Redeemer is! he hath lives and crowns to give, eternal lives that never die, immortal crowns that never fade. Now consider how great the Lord Jesus is, who hath such preferments in his gift; and how gracious he is in giving eternal life to those, whom he undertakes to save. 1. He sanctifies them in this world, gives them the spiritual life, which is eternal life in the bud and embryo, John iv. 14. Grace in the soul, is heaven in that soul. 2. He will glorify them in the other world; their happiness shall be compleated in the vision and fruition of God: And this only is mentioned, because it supposeth all the other parts of his undertaking, teaching them, satisfying for them, sanctifying them, and preparing them for that eternal life; and, indeed, all the other were in order to this; we are called to his kingdom and glory, and begotten to the inheritance; what is last in execution, was first in intention, and that is eternal life.

3. Here is the subserviency of the Redeemer's universal dominion to this: *He hath power over all flesh*, on purpose that he might give eternal life to the select number. Note, Christ's dominion over the children of men, is in order to the salvation of the children of God. All things are for their sakes, 2 Cor. iv. 15. All Christ's laws, ordinances, and promises, which are given to all, are designed effectually to convey spiritual life, and secure eternal life to all that were given to Christ; he is head over all things to the church: The administration of the kingdoms of providence and grace, are put into the same hand, that all things may be made to concur for good to the called.

(4.) Here is a further explication of this grand design, ver. 3. *This is life eternal*, which I am empowered, and have undertaken to give, this is the nature of it, and this the way leading to it, to know thee the only true God, and all the discoveries and principles of natural religion, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, as mediator, and the doctrines and laws of that holy religion, which he instituted for the recovery of man out of his lapsed state. Here is,

1. The great end which the Christian religion sets before us, and that is eternal life, the happiness of an immortal soul in the vision and fruition of an eternal God: This he was to reveal to all, and secure to all, that were given him. By the gospel, life and immortality are brought to light, are brought to hand, a life which transcends this as much in excellency as it doth in duration.

2. The sure way of attaining this blessed end, which is by the right knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ; this is life eternal, to know thee; which may be taken two ways, 1. Life eternal lies in the knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ; the present principle of this life, is the believing knowledge of God, and Christ; the future perfection of that life, will be the intuitive knowledge of God, and Christ: They that are brought into union with Christ, and live a life of communion with God in Christ, know, in some measure, by experience, what eternal life is, and will say, if this be heaven, heaven is sweet: See Psalm xvii. 15. 2. The knowledge of God, and Christ, leads to life eternal; this is the way in which Christ gives eternal life, by the knowledge of him that hath called us, 2 Pet. i. 3. and this is the way in which we come to receive it.

The Christian religion shews us the way to heaven,

1. By directing us to God, as the author and felicity of our being; for Christ died to bring us to God, to know him as our Creator, and to love him, obey him, submit to him, and trust in him as our Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor, to devote ourselves to him as our sovereign Lord, depend upon him as our chief good, and to direct all to his praise as our highest end; this is life eternal. God is here called the only true God, to distinguish him from the false gods of the heathen, which were counterfeits and pretenders, not from the person of the Son, of whom it is expressly said, that he is the true God, and eternal life, 1 John v. 20. and who, in this text, is proposed as the object of the same religious regard with the Father. It is certain, there is but one only living and true God, and the God we adore is he: He is the true God, and not a meer name or notion; the only true God; and all that ever set up as rivals with him, are vanity, and a lye; the service of him is the only true religion.

2. By directing us to Jesus Christ, as the mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. If man had continued innocent, the knowledge of the only true God would have been life eternal to him; but now he is fallen, there must be something more; now we are under guilt, to know God, is to know him as a righteous Judge, whose curse we are under, and nothing more killing than to know this; we are therefore concerned to know Christ as our Redeemer, by whom alone we can now have access to God; it is life eternal to believe in Christ; and this he has undertaken to give to as many as were given him: See John vi. 39, 40. They that are acquainted with God, and Christ, are already in the suburbs of life eternal.

Secondly, Christ here prays to be glorified, in consideration of his having glorified the Father hitherto; ver. 4, 5: The meaning of the former petition was, glorify me in this world; the meaning of the latter is, glorify me in the other world: I have glorified thee on the earth, and now glorify thou me. Observe here,



1. With what comfort Christ reflects on the life he had lived on earth: *I have glorified thee, and finished my work*; it is as good as finished: He doth not complain of the poverty and disgrace he had lived in, what a weary life he had had upon earth, as ever any man of sorrows had; he overlooks this, and pleaseth himself in reviewing the service he had done his Father, and the progress he had made in his undertaking: And this is here recorded,

(1.) For the honour of Christ, that his life upon earth did, in all respects, fully answer the end of his coming into the world. Note, 1. Our Lord Jesus had work given him to do, by him that sent him; he came not into the world to live at ease, but to go about doing good, and to fulfil all righteousness. His Father gave him his work, his work in the vineyard; both appointed him to it, and assisted him in it. 2. The work that was given him to do, he finished: Though he had not, as yet, gone through the last part of his undertaking, yet he was so near being made perfect through sufferings, that he might say he had finished it; it was as good as done, he was giving it its finishing strokes, *ἐτελείωσα*. The word signifies his performing every part of his undertaking in the most compleat and perfect manner. 3. Herein he glorified his Father; he pleased him, he praised him; it is the glory of God that his work is perfect, and the same is the glory of the Redeemer; what he is the author of, he will be the finisher of. It was a strange way for the Son to glorify the Father by abusing himself, that looked more likely to disparage him, yet it was contrived that so he should glorify him. *I have glorified thee on the earth*, i. e. in such a way as men on earth could bear the manifestation of thy glory.

(2.) It is recorded for example to all, that we may follow his example. 1. We must make it our business to do the work God has appointed us to do, according as our capacity, and the sphere of our activity is; we must each of us do all the good we can in this world. 2. We must aim at the glory of God in all. We must glorify him on the earth, which he has given unto the children of men; demanding only this quit-rent; on the earth, where we are in a state of probation and preparation for eternity. 3. We must persevere herein to the end of our days; we must not sit down till we have finished our work, and accomplished as a hireling our day.

(3.) It is recorded for encouragement to all those that rest upon him: If he have finished the work that was given him to do, then he is a compleat Saviour, and did not do his work by the halves: And he that finished his work for us, will finish it in us to the day of Christ.

2. See with what confidence he expects the joy set before him, ver. 5. Now, O Father, glorify thou me. It is what he depends upon; and cannot be denied him.

(1.) See here what he prayed for, *Glorify thou me*, as before, ver. 1. All repetitions in prayer are not to be counted vain repetitions; Christ prayed, saying the same words, Matt. xxvi. 44. and yet prayed more earnestly. What his Father had promised him, and he was assured of, yet he must pray for; promises are not designed to supersede prayers, but to be the guide of our desires, and the ground of our hopes. Christ being glorified, includes all the honours, powers, and joys of his exalted state. See how it is described.

1. It is a glory with God; not only glorify my name on earth, but glorify me with thine own self: It was paradise, it was heaven, to be with his Father, as Prov. viii. 30. Dan. vii. 13. Heb. viii. 1. Note, The brightest glories of the exalted Redeemer, were to be displayed within the veil, where the Father manifests his glory. The praises of the upper world are offered up to him that sits upon the throne; and to the Lamb in conjunction, Rev. v. 13. and the prayers of the lower world draw out grace and peace from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ in conjunction, and thus the Father has glorified him with himself.

2. It is the glory he had with God before the world was. By this it appears, 1. That Jesus Christ, as God, had a being before the world was, co-eternal with the Father; our religion acquaints us with one that was before all things, and by whom all things consist. 2. That his glory with the Father is from everlasting, as well as his existence with the Father; for he was from eternity, the brightness of his Father's glory, Heb. i. 3. As God's making the world only declared his glory, but made no real additions to it; so Christ undertook the work of redemption, not because he needed glory, for he had a glory with the Father before the world, but because we needed glory. 3. That Jesus Christ, in his state of humiliation, divested himself of this glory, and drew a veil over it; though he was still God, yet he was God, manifested in the flesh, not in his glory: He laid down this glory for a time as a pawn or pledge, that he would go through with his undertaking according to the appointment of his Father. 4. That in his exalted state he resumed this glory, and clad himself again with his former robes of light: Having performed his undertaking, he did, as it were, *repositere pignus*, take up his pawn by this demand, *Glorify thou me*. He prays that even his human nature might be advanced to the highest honour it was capable of, his body a glorious body; and that the glory of the Godhead might now be manifested in the person of the Mediator, Immanuel, God-man. He doth not pray to be glorified with the princes and great men of the earth; no; he that knew both worlds, and might choose which he would have

his preferment in, chose it in the glory of the other world, as far exceeding all the glory of this: He had despised the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, when Satan offered them to him, and therefore might the more boldly claim the glories of the other world. Let the same mind be in us: Lord, give the glories of this world to whom thou wilt give them, but let me have my portion of glory in the world to come: It is no matter, though I be vilified with men; but, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self.

(2.) See here what he pleaded; *I have glorified thee*; and now, in consideration thereof, glorify thou me. For, 1. There was an equity in it, and an admirable becomingness, that if God were glorified in him, he should glorify him in himself, as he had observed, John xiii. 32. Such an infinite value there was in what Christ did to glorify his Father, that he properly merited all the glories of his exalted state. If the Father were a gainer in his glory by the Son's humiliation, it was fit the Son should be no loser by it, at long run, in his glory.

2. It was according to the covenant between them, that if the Son would make his soul an offering for sin, he should divide the spoil with the strong, Isa. liii. 10, 11. and the kingdom should be his; and this he had an eye to, and depended upon, in his sufferings; it was for the joy set before him, that he endured the cross: And now, in his exalted state, he still expects the completing of his exaltation, because he perfected his undertaking, Heb. x. 13.

3. It was the most proper evidence of his Father's accepting and approving the work he had finished. By the glorifying of Christ, we are satisfied that God was satisfied, and therein a real demonstration was given, that his Father was well pleased in him as his beloved Son.

4. Thus we must be taught, that those, and those only, who glorify God on earth, and persevere in the work God hath given them to do, shall be glorified with the Father, when they must be no more in this world: Not that we can merit that glory as Christ did, but our glorifying God is required as an evidence of our interest in Christ, through whom eternal life is God's free gift.

6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. 7. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. 8. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. 9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. 10. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.

Christ having prayed for himself, comes next to pray for those that are his, and he knew them by name, though he did not here name them. Now observe here,

1. Whom he did not pray for, ver. 9. *I pray not for the world*. Note, There is a world of people that Jesus Christ did not pray for. It is not meant of the world of mankind in general, he prays for that here, ver. 21. That the world may believe that thou hast sent me. Nor is it meant of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; but the world is here opposed to the elect, who are given to Christ out of the world. Take the world for a heap of unwinnowed corn in the floor, and God loves it, Christ prays for it, and dies for it, for a blessing is in it; but the Lord perfectly knowing them that are his, he eyes particularly them that were given him out of the world, extracts them; and then take the world for the remaining heap of rejected, worthless chaff, and Christ neither prays for it, nor dies for it, but abandons it, and the wind drives it away. These are called the world, because they are governed by the spirit of this world, and have their portion in it; for these Christ doth not pray; not but that there are some things which he intercedes with God for on their behalf, as the dresser for the reprieve of the barren tree; but he doth not pray for them in this prayer, they have no part or lot in the blessings here prayed for. He doth not say, *I pray against the world*, as Elias made intercession against Israel, but, *I pray not for them*, I pass them by, and leave them to themselves; they are not written in the Lamb's book of life, and therefore not in the breast-plate of the great High-priest: And miserable is the condition of such, as of those whom the prophet was forbidden to pray for, and more so, Jer. vii. 16. We that know not who are chosen, and who are passed by, must pray for all men, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 4. While there is life there is hope, and room for prayer. See 1 Sam. xii. 23.

2. Whom he did pray for; not for angels, but for the children of men. 1. He prays for those that were given him, meaning primarily the disciples that had attended him in the regeneration; but it is, doubtless, to be extended further, to all who come under the same character, who receive and believe the words of Christ, ver. 6, 8. 2. He prays for all that should believe on him, ver. 20. and it is not only the petitions that follow, but those also which went before, that must be construed to extend to all believers, in every place,



place, and every age; for he has a concern for them all, and calls things that are not, as though they were.

3. What encouragement he had to pray for them, and what the general pleas with which he introduceth his petitions for them, and recommends them to his Father's favour; they are five.

First, The charge he had received concerning them: *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*, ver. 6. and again, ver. 7. *Thou hast given them me, and they are of thee*; and again, ver. 9. *Them which thou hast given me*. Father, those I am now praying for, are such as thou hast intrusted me with, and what I have to say for them is in pursuance of the charge I have received concerning them. Now,

1. This is meant primarily of the disciples that then were, who were given to Christ as his pupils to be educated by him while he was on earth, and his agents to be employed for him when he went to heaven: They were given him to be the learners of his doctrine, the witnesses of his life and miracles, and the monuments of his grace and favour, in order to their being the publishers of his gospel, and the planters of his church. When they left all to follow him, this was the secret spring of that strange resolution; they were given to him, else they had not given themselves to him. Note, The apostleship and ministry, which is Christ's gift to the church, was first the Father's gift to Jesus Christ. As under the law the Levites were given to Aaron, Numb. iii. 9. so he, the great High-priest of our profession, the Father, gave the apostles first, and ministers in every age, to keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, and to do the service of the tabernacle: See Eph. iv. 8, 11. Psalm lxxviii. 18. Christ received this gift for men, that he might give it to men. As this puts a great honour upon the ministry of the gospel, and magnifies that office, which is so much vilified; so it lays a mighty obligation upon the ministers of the gospel, to devote themselves entirely to Christ's service, as being given to him.

2. But it is designed to extend to all the elect, for they are elsewhere said to be given to Christ, John vi. 37, 39. and he often laid a stress upon this, that those he was to save were given to him as his charge, to his care they were committed, from his hand they were expected, and concerning them he received commandments. He here shews,

(1.) That the Father had authority to give them: *Thine they were*. He did not give that which was none of his own, but covenanted that he had a good title. The elect that the Father gave to Christ, were his own three ways: 1. They were creatures, and their lives and beings were derived from him: When they were given to Christ, to be vessels of honour, they were in his hand, as clay in the hand of the potter, to be disposed of as God's wisdom saw most for God's glory. 2. They were criminals, and their lives and beings were forfeited to him: It was a remnant of fallen mankind that was given to Christ to be redeemed, that might have been made sacrifices to justice then, when they were pitched upon to be the monuments of mercy; might justly have been delivered to the tormentors, when they were delivered to the Saviour. 3. They were chosen, and their lives and beings were designed for him; they were set apart for God, and were consigned to Christ as his agent. This he insists upon again, ver. 7. *All things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee*; which, though it may take in all that appertained to his office as mediator, yet seems especially to be meant of those that were given him: They are of thee, their being is of thee as the God of nature, their well-being is of thee as the God of grace; they are all of thee, and therefore, Father, I bring them all to thee; that they may be all for thee.

(2.) That he did accordingly give them to the Son: *Thou gavest them me*, as sheep to the shepherd, to be kept; a patient to the physician, to be cured; children to a tutor, to be educated; thus he will deliver up his charge, Heb. ii. 13. *The children thou hast given me*. They were delivered to Christ, 1. That the election of grace might not be frustrated, that not one, no not of the little ones might perish: That great concern must be lodged in some one good hand, able to give sufficient security, that the purpose of God according to election might stand. 2. That the undertaking of Christ might not be fruitless; they were given to him as his seed, in whom he should see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, Isa. liii. 10, 11. and might not spend his strength, and shed his blood for nought, and in vain, Isa. xlix. 4. We may plead, as Christ doth, Lord, keep my graces, keep my comforts, for thine they were, and thou gavest them me.

Secondly, The care he had taken of them to teach them, ver. 6. *I have manifested thy name to them*. And, ver. 8. *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me*. Observe here,

1. The great design of Christ's doctrine, which was to manifest God's name, to declare him, John i. 18. to instruct the ignorant, and rectify the mistakes of a dark and foolish world concerning God, that he might be better loved and worshipped.

2. His faithful discharge of this undertaking; *I have done it*. And his fidelity appears, 1. In the truth of his doctrine: It agreed exactly with the instructions he received from his Father: He gave not only the things, but the very words that were given him. Ministers, in wording their message, must have an eye to the words which the holy Ghost teacheth. 2. In the tendency of his doctrine, which was to manifest God's name. He did not seek himself, but,

in all he did and said, aimed to magnify his Father. Note, 1. It is Christ's prerogative to manifest God's name to the souls of the children of men: *No man knows the Father, but he to whom the Son will reveal him*, Matt. xi. 27. He only hath acquaintance with the Father, and so is able to open the truth; and he only hath access to the spirits of men, and so is able to open the understanding. Ministers may publish the name of the Lord, as Moses, Deut. xxxii. 3. but Christ only can manifest that name. By the word of Christ, God is revealed to us; by the Spirit of Christ, God is revealed in us. Ministers may speak the words of God to us, but Christ can give us his words, can put them in us, as food, as treasure.

2. Sooner or later Christ will manifest God's name to all that were given him, and will give them his word, to be the seed of their new birth, the support of their spiritual life, and the earnest of their everlasting bliss.

Thirdly, The good effect of the care he had taken of them, and the pains he had taken with them, ver. 6. *They have kept thy word*; ver. 7. *They have known that all things are of thee*; ver. 8. *They have received thy words*, and embraced them, have given their assent and consent to them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and have believed that thou didst send me. Observe here,

(1.) What success the doctrine of Christ had among those that were given him, in several particulars.

1. They have received the words which I gave them; as the ground receives the seed, and the earth drinks in the rain: They attended to the words of Christ, apprehended, in some measure, the meaning of them, and were affected with them: They received the impression of them: It was to them an engrafted word.

2. They have kept thy word, have continued in it; they have conformed to it. Christ's commandment is then only kept, when it is obeyed. They that were to teach others the commands of Christ, ought to be themselves observant of them: It was requisite they should keep what was committed to them, for it was to be transmitted by them to every place for every age.

3. They have understood the word, and have been sensible on what ground they went in receiving and keeping of it. They have been aware that thou art the original author of that holy religion which I am come to institute; that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. All Christ's offices and powers, all the gifts of the Spirit, all his graces and comforts; which God gave without measure to him, were all from God; contrived by his wisdom, appointed by his will, and designed by his grace, for his own glory in man's salvation. Note, It is a great satisfaction to us, in our reliance upon Christ, that he, and all he is, and has, all he said and did, all he is doing, and will do, is of God, 1 Cor. i. 30. We may therefore venture our souls upon Christ's mediation, for it has a good bottom. If the righteousness be of God's appointing, we shall be justified; if the grace be of his dispensing, we shall be sanctified.

4. They have set their seal to it: They have known surely that I came out from God, ver. 8. See here,

(1.) What it is to believe, it is to know surely, know that it is so of a truth. The disciples were very weak and defective in knowledge, yet Christ, who knew them better than they knew themselves, passeth his word for them that they did believe. Note, We may know surely that, which we neither do nor can know fully; may know the certainty of the things which are not seen, though we cannot particularly describe the nature of them. We walk by faith, which knows surely, not yet by sight, which knows clearly.

(2.) What it is we are to believe, that Jesus Christ came out from God, as he is the Son of God, in his person the image of the invisible God, and that God did send him; that in his undertaking he is the ambassador of the eternal King; so that the Christian religion stands upon the same foot, and is of equal authority, with natural religion; and therefore all the doctrines of Christ are to be received as divine truths, all his commands obeyed as divine laws, and all his promises depended upon as divine securities.

(2.) How Jesus Christ speaks of this here; he enlarges upon it;

1. As pleased with it himself. Though the many instances of his disciples dulness and weakness had grieved him, yet their constant adherence to him, their gradual improvements, and their great attainments at last, were his joy. Christ is a master that delights in the proficiency of his scholars: He accepts the sincerity of their faith, and graciously passeth by the infirmity of it. See how willing he is to make the best of us, and to say the best of us! thereby encouraging our faith in him, and teaching us charity to one another.

2. As pleading it with his Father. He is praying for those that were given him, and he pleads that they had given themselves to him. Note, The due improvement of grace received, is a good plea; according to the tenor of the new covenant, for further grace; for so runs the promise, to him that hath, shall be given. They that keep Christ's word, and believe on him, let Christ alone to commend them, and, which is more, to recommend them to his Father.

Fourthly, He pleads the Father's own interest in them, ver. 9. *I pray for them, for they are thine*; and this by virtue of a joint and mutual interest, which he and the Father have in what pertained to each; all mine are thine, and thine are mine: Betwixt the Fa-

ther



ther and Son there can be no dispute (as there is among the children of men) about *meum* and *tuum*, for the matter was settled from eternity; *all mine are thine; and thine are mine*. Here is,

(1.) The plea particularly urged for his disciples; *They are thine*. The consigning of the elect to Christ was so far from making them less the Father's, that it was in order to the making them the more so. Note, 1. All that receive Christ's word, and believe in him, are taken into covenant relation to the Father, and are looked upon as his; Christ presents them to him, and they, through Christ, present themselves to him: Christ has redeemed us, not to himself only, but to God, by his blood, Rev. v. 9, 10. *They are first-fruits unto God*, Rev. xiv. 4. 2. This is a good plea in prayer, Christ here pleads it, *They are thine*; we may plead it for ourselves; *I am thine, save me*; and for others, as Moses, Exod. xxxii. 11. *They are thy people. They are thine*; wilt thou not provide for thine own? Wilt thou not secure them, that they may not be run down by the devil, and the world? Wilt thou not secure thine interest in them, that they may not depart from thee? *They are thine, own them as thine*.

(2.) The foundation on which this plea is grounded; *All mine are thine, and thine are mine*. This speaks the Father and Son to be, 1. One in essence. Every creature must say to God, *All mine are thine*; but none can say to him, *All thine are mine*, but he that is the same in substance with him, and equal in power and glory. 2. One in interest; no separate or divided interests between them.

1. What the Father has, as Creator, is delivered over to the Son, to be used and disposed of, in subserviency to his great undertaking. *All things are delivered to him*, Matt. xi. 27. the grant so general, that nothing was excepted, but *he that did put all things under him*.

2. What the Son hath, as Redeemer, is designed for the Father, and his kingdom shall shortly be delivered up to him. All the benefits of redemption, purchased by the Son, are intended for the Father's praise, and in his glory all the lines of his undertaking centre: *All mine are thine*. The Son owns none for his, that are not devoted to the service of the Father; nor will any thing be accepted as a piece of service to the Christian religion, which clashes with the dictates and laws of natural religion. In a limited sense, every true believer may say, *All thine are mine*; if God be ours in covenant, all he is, and has, is so far ours, as that it shall be engaged for our good; and in an unlimited sense, every true believer doth say, Lord, *All mine are thine*; all laid at his feet to be serviceable to him: And then what we have may be comfortably committed to God's care and blessings, when it is cheerfully submitted to his government and dispose: Lord, take care of what I have, for it is *all thine*.

Fifthly, He pleads his own concern in them: *I am glorified in them, ἡδοξάμην*.

1. *I have been glorified in them*; what little honour Christ had in this world was among his disciples; he had been glorified by their attendance on him, and obedience to him; their preaching and working miracles in his name; and therefore *I pray for them*. Note, Those shall have an interest in Christ's intercession, in and by whom he is glorified.

2. *I am to be glorified in them*, when I am gone to heaven; they are to bear up my name. The apostles preached and wrought miracles in Christ's name, the Spirit, in them, glorified Christ, John xvi. 14. *I am glorified in them*, and therefore, 1. I concern myself for them. What little interest Christ has in this degenerate world, lies in his church; and therefore it, and all its affairs, lie near his heart, within the veil. 2. Therefore I commit them to the Father, who has engaged to glorify the Son, and, upon that account, will have a gracious eye to those in whom he is glorified: That, in which God and Christ are glorified, may, with humble confidence, be committed to God's special care.

11. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. 12. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13. And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 14. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. 16. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

After the general pleas, with which Christ recommended his disciples to his Father's care, follow the particular petitions he puts up for them; and, 1. They all relate to spiritual blessings in heavenly things: He doth not pray that they might be rich and great in the world, that they might raise estates, and get preferments, but that they might be kept from sin, and furnished for their duty, and

brought safe to heaven. Note, The prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity, for what relates to that, Christ came to purchase and bestow, and so teacheth us to seek, in the first place, both for others, and for ourselves. 2. They are such blessings as were suited to their present state and case, and the exigencies and occasions of that. Note, Christ's intercession is always pertinent: Our advocate with the Father is acquainted with all the particulars of our wants and burdens, our dangers and difficulties, and knows how to accommodate his intercession to each, as to Peter's peril, which he himself was not aware of, Luke xxii. 32. *I have prayed for thee*. 3. He is large and full in the petitions, orders them before his Father, and fills his mouth with arguments, to teach us fervency and importunity in prayer, to be large in prayer, and dwell upon our errands at the throne of grace, wrestling as Jacob, *I will not let thee go, except thou blest me*.

Now the first thing Christ prays for for his disciples, is their preservation, in these verses; in order to which he commits them all to his Father's custody. Keeping supposes danger, and their danger arose from the world, the world wherein they were, the evil of this he begs they might be kept from. Now observe,

First, The request itself: *Keep them from the world*. There were two ways of their being delivered from the world:

(1.) By taking them out of it; and he doth not pray that they might be so delivered; *I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world*; that is,

1. *I pray not that they may speedily be removed by death*. If the world will be vexatious to them, the readiest way to secure them, would be to hasten them out of it to a better world, that will give them better treatment; send chariots and horses of fire for them to fetch them to heaven; Job, Elijah, Jonah, Moses, when that occurred which fretted them, prayed that they might be taken out of the world; but Christ would not pray so for his disciples, for two reasons. (1.) Because he came to conquer, not to countenance those intemperate heats and passions which make men impatient of life, and importunate for death: It is his will that we should take up our cross, and not outrun it. (2.) Because he had work for them to do in the world; the world, though sick of them, Acts xxii. 22. and therefore not worthy of them, Heb. xi. 38. yet could ill spare them: In pity therefore to this dark world, Christ would not have these lights removed out of it, but continued in it, especially for the sake of those in the world, that were to believe in him through their word. Let not them be taken out of the world, when their Master is; they must each, in their own order, die martyrs, but not till they have finished their testimony. Note, 1. The taking of good people out of the world is a thing by no means to be desired, but dreaded rather, and laid to heart, Isa. lvii. 1. 2. Though Christ loves his disciples, he doth not presently send for them to heaven, as soon as they are effectually called, but leaves them for some time in this world, that they may do good, and glorify God upon earth, and be ripened for heaven. Many good people are spared to live, because they can ill be spared to die.

2. *I pray not that they may be totally freed and exempted from the troubles of this world, and taken out of the toil and terror of it into some place of ease and safety, there to live undisturbed*; that is not the preservation I desire for them: *Non ut omni molestia liberati otium et delicias colant, sed ut inter media pericula salvi tamen maneant Dei auxilio*; so Calvin. Not that they may be kept from all conflict with the world, but that they may not be overcome by it; not that, as Jeremiah wished, they might leave their people, and go from them, Jer. ix. 2. but that, like Ezekiel, their faces may be strong against the faces of wicked men, Ezek. iii. 8. It is more the honour of a Christian soldier by faith to overcome the world, than by a monastical vow to retreat from it; and more for the honour of Christ to serve him in a city, than to serve him in a cell.

(2.) Another way is by keeping them from the corruption that is in the world; and thus he prays they may be kept, ver. 11, 15. Here are three branches of this petition:

1. *Holy Father, keep those whom thou hast given me*. Christ was now leaving them, but let them not think that their defence was departed from them, no, he doth here in their hearing commit them to the custody of his Father, and their Father. Note, It is the unspeakable comfort of all believers, that Christ himself has committed them to the care of God himself. Those cannot but be safe whom the almighty God keeps, and he cannot but keep those whom the Son of his love commits to him; in the virtue of which we may, by faith, commit the keeping of our souls to God, 1 Pet. iv. 19. 2 Tim. i. 12. 1. He here puts them under the divine protection, that they might not be run down by the malice of their enemies; that they, and all their concerns, might be the particular care of the divine providence: *Keep their lives*, till they have done their work; *keep their comforts*, and let not them be broken in upon by the hardships they meet with; *keep up their interest in the world*, and let not that sink. To this prayer is owing the wonderful preservation of the gospel ministry, and gospel church, in the world unto this day; if God had not graciously kept both, and kept up both, they had been extinguished and lost long ago. 2. He puts them under the divine tuition, that they might not themselves run away from their duty, or be



led aside by the treachery of their own hearts. *Keep them* in their integrity, keep them disciples, keep them close to their duty. We need God's power, not only to put us into a state of grace, but to keep us in it. See *John* x. 28, 29. *1 Pet.* i. 5.

The titles he gives to him he prays to; and them he prays for, enforce the petition.

1. He speaks to God as a *holy Father*. In committing ourselves and others to the divine care, we may take encouragement, 1. From the attribute of his holiness, for that is engaged for the preservation of his holy ones; he hath *sworn by his holiness*, *Psal.* lxxxix. 35. If he be a holy God, and hate sin, he will make those that are his holy, and keep them from sin, who hate it too, and dread it as the greatest evil. 2. From this relation of a Father, wherein he stands to us through Christ. If he be a Father, he will take care of his own children, will teach them, and keep them; who else should?

2. He speaks of them as those whom the Father *had given him*. What we receive as our Father's gifts, we may comfortably remit to our Father's care. Father keep the graces and comforts thou hast given me; the children thou hast given me; the ministry *I have received*.

2. Keep them *through thine own name*. That is,

1. Keep them *for thy name's sake*; so some. Thy name and honour is concerned in their preservation as well as mine, for both will suffer it, if they either *revolt* or *sink*. The Old Testament saints often pleaded *for thy name's sake*; and those may with comfort plead it; that are indeed more concerned for the honour of God's name, than for any interest of their own.

2. Keep them *in thy name*; so others, the original is *ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*, keep them in the knowledge and fear of thy name; keep them in the profession and service of thy name, whatever it cost them. Keep them in the interest of thy name, and let them ever be faithful to that; keep them in thy truths, in thine ordinances, in the way of thy commandments.

3. Keep them *by or through thy name*; so others. Keep them by thine own power, in thine own hand; keep them thyself, undertake for them, let them be thine own immediate care. Keep them by those means of preservation, which thou hast thyself appointed, and by which thou hast made thyself known. Keep them by thy word and ordinances; let thy name be their strong tower; thy tabernacle their pavilion.

3. Keep them *from the evil*; or out of the evil; he had taught them to pray daily, *deliver us from evil*, and this would encourage them to pray,

1. Keep them from the *evil one*, the devil and all his instruments; that *wicked one* and all his children. Keep them from Satan as a tempter, that either he may not have leave to sift them, or that their faith may not fail. Keep them from him as a destroyer, that he may not drive them to despair.

2. Keep them from the evil thing, that is sin, from every thing that looks like it, or leads to it. Keep them that they *do no evil*, *2 Cor.* xiii. 7. Sin is that evil, which above any other we should dread and deprecate.

3. Keep them from the evil of the world, and of their tribulation in it, so that it may have no sting in it, no malignity; not that they might be kept from affliction, but kept through it, that the property of their afflictions might be so altered, as that there might be no evil in them, nothing to do them any harm.

Secondly, The reasons with which he enforceth these requests for their preservation, which are five.

1. He pleads that *hitherto* he *had kept them*, *ver.* 12. *While I was with them in the world, I have kept them in thy name*, in the true faith of the gospel, and the service of God, those that thou gavest me for my constant attendants I have kept, they are all safe, and none of them missing, none of them revolted or ruined, but the *son of perdition*; he is lost, that the scripture might be fulfilled. Observe,

1. Christ's faithful discharge of his undertaking concerning his disciples, *while he was with them he kept them*, and his care concerning them was not in vain. He kept them in God's name, preserved them from falling into any dangerous errors or sins; from striking in with the Pharisees, who would have compassed sea and land to make proselytes of them; he kept them from deserting him, and returning to that little all they had left for him; he had them still under his eye and care, when he sent them to preach, *went not his heart with them?* Many that followed him a while, took offence at something or other and went off, but he kept the twelve that they also should not go away. He kept them from falling into the hands of persecuting enemies that sought their lives; kept them when he surrendered himself, *chap.* xviii. 9. *While he was with them*, he kept them in a visible manner, by instructions still sounding in their ears, miracles still done before their eyes; when he was gone from them, they must be kept in a more spiritual manner. Sensible comforts and supports are sometimes given, and sometimes withheld; but when they are withdrawn, yet they are not left comfortless.

What Christ here saith of his immediate followers, is true of all the saints, *while they are here in this world*, Christ keeps them in God's name; it is implied, 1. That they are weak, and cannot

keep themselves; their *own hands* are not *sufficient for them*. 2. That they are in God's account valuable, and worth the keeping; precious in his sight, and honourable; his treasure, his jewels. 3. That their salvation is designed, for to that it is that they are kept, *1 Pet.* i. 4. As the wicked are reserved for the day of evil, so the righteous are preserved for the day of bliss. 4. That they are the charge of the Lord Jesus, for as his charge he keeps them, and exposed himself like the *good shepherd*, for the preservation of the sheep.

2. The comfortable account he gives of his undertaking. *None of them is lost*. Note, Jesus Christ will certainly keep all that were given him, so as that none of them shall be totally and finally lost; they may think themselves lost, and may be near lost, in imminent peril, but it is the Father's will he should *lose none*, and none he *will lose*, *John* vi. 39. so it will appear when they come all together, and none of them shall be wanting.

3. A brand put upon Judas, as none of those whom he had undertaken to keep. He was among those that were given to Christ; but not of them. He speaks of Judas as already lost, for he had abandoned the society of his master, and his fellow-disciples, and abandoned himself to the devil's conduct, and in a little time would go to his own place; he is as good as lost.

But the apostasy and ruin of Judas was no reproach at all to his Master, or his family, for,

1. He was the *son of perdition*, and therefore none of those that were given to Christ to be kept. He deserved perdition, and God left him to throw himself headlong into it. He was the *son of the destroyer*, as Cain, who was of *that wicked one*. That great enemy whom the Lord will consume, is called a *son of perdition*, because he is a *man of sin*, *2 Thess.* ii. 3. It is an awful consideration that one of the apostles proved a *son of perdition*. No man's place or name in the church; no man's privileges or opportunities of getting grace; no man's profession or external performances, will secure him from ruin, if his heart be not right with God; nor are any more likely to prove *sons of perdition* at last after a plausible course of profession, than those that, like Judas, love the bag. But Christ's distinguishing Judas from those that were given him (for *ἐκ μὲν* is adverbative, not exceptive) intimates, that the truth and true religion ought not to suffer for the treachery of those that are false to it, *1 John* ii. 19.

2. The scripture was fulfilled; the sin of Judas was foreseen in God's counsel, and foretold in his word, and the event would certainly follow after the prediction as a consequent, though it cannot be said necessarily to *follow from it* as an effect. See *Psal.* xli. 9.—lxix. 25.—cix. 8. One would be amazed at the treachery of apostates, were we not told it before.

2. He pleads, that he was now under a necessity of leaving them, and could no longer watch over them in the way that he had hitherto done it, *ver.* 11. Keep them now, that I may not lose the labour I bestowed upon them while I was with them. Keep them that they may be one with us, as we are with each other. We shall have occasion to speak of that, *ver.* 21. But see here,

1. With what pleasure he speaks of his own departure. He expresseth himself concerning it, with an air of triumph and exultation, with reference both to the world he left, and the world he removed to.

(1.) *Now I am no more in the world*. Now farewell to this provoking, troublesome world, I have had enough of it, and now the welcome hour is at hand, when I shall be *no more in it*. Now I have finished the work I had to do in it, I have done with it, nothing remains now, but to hasten out of it as fast as I can. Note, It should be a pleasure to those that have their home in the other world, to think of being *no more in this world*; for when we have done what we have to do in this world, and are made meet for that; what is there here that should court our stay? When we receive a sentence of death within ourselves, with what a holy triumph should we say, *now I am no more in this world*, this dark, deceitful world, this poor, empty world, this tempting, defiling world, no more vexed with its thorns and briers, no more endangered by its nets and snares; now I shall wander no more in this howling wilderness, be tost no more on this stormy sea, *now I am no more in this world*, but can cheerfully quit it, and give it final farewell.

(2.) *Now I come to thee*. To get clear of the world, is but the one half of the comfort of a dying Christ, of a dying Christian, the far better half is to think of going to the Father, to sit down in the immediate, uninterrupted, and everlasting enjoyment of him. Note, They who love God cannot but be pleased to think of coming to him, though it be through the valley of the shadow of death. When we go to be *absent from the body*, it is to be *present with the Lord*, like children fetched home from school to their father's house. Now come I to thee whom I have chosen and served, and whom my soul thirsteth after; to thee the fountain of light and life, the crown and centre of bliss and joy; now my longings shall be satisfied, my hopes accomplished, my happiness completed, for *now come I to thee*.

2. With what a tender concern he speaks of those whom he left behind; *but these are in the world*. I have found what an evil world it is, what will become of these dear little ones, that must stay in it? *Holy Father, keep them*; they will want my presence,



let them have thine. They have now more need than ever to be kept, for I am sending them out further into the world than they have yet ventured; they must *lanch forth into the deep*, and have business to do in these great waters, and will be lost if thou do not keep them. Observe here,

(1.) That when our Lord Jesus was going to the Father, he carried with him a tender concern for *his own which are in the world*, and continued to compassionate them. He bears their names upon his breast-plate, nay upon his heart, and has *graven them* with the hails of his cross upon the palms of his hands; and when he is out of their sight, they are not out of his, much less out of his mind. We should have such a pity for those that are lanching out into the world, when we are got almost through it; and for those that are left behind in it, when we are leaving it.

(2.) That when Christ would express the utmost need his disciples had of divine preservation, he only saith, *they are in the world*; that speaks danger enough to those who are bound for heaven, whom a flattering world would divert and seduce, and a malignant world would hate and persecute.

3. He pleads what a satisfaction it would be to them to know themselves safe, and what a satisfaction it would be to him to see them easy, *I speak this that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves*, ver. 13. Observe,

1. Christ earnestly desired the *fulness of the joy* of his disciples, for it is his will that they should rejoice evermore. He was leaving them in tears and troubles, and yet took effectual care to fulfil their joy. When they thought their joy in him was brought to an end, then was it advanced nearer to perfection, than ever it had been, and they were fuller of it. We are here taught, (1.) To find our joy in Christ, it is my joy, joy of my giving, or rather, joy that I am the matter of. Christ is a Christian's joy, his chief joy; joy in the world is withering with it, joy in Christ is everlasting like him. (2.) To build up our joy with diligence; for it is the duty as well as privilege of all true believers; no part of the Christian life is pressed upon us more earnestly, *Phil. iii. 1.—iv. 4.* (3.) To aim at the perfection of this joy, that we may have it fulfilled in us, for this Christ would have.

2. In order hereunto he did thus solemnly commit them to his Father's care and keeping, and took them for witnesses that he did so. *These things I speak in the world*, while I am yet with them in the world; his intercession in heaven for their preservation would have been as effectual in it self, but saying this in the world, would be a greater satisfaction and encouragement to them, and would enable them to rejoice in tribulation. Note, 1. Christ has not only treasured up comforts for his people, in providing for their future welfare, but has given out comforts to them, and said that which will be for their present satisfaction. He here condescended, in the presence of his disciples, to publish his last will and testament, and (which many a testator is shy of) lets them know what legacies he had left them, and how well they were secured, that they might have strong consolation. 2. Christ's intercession for us is enough to fulfil our joy in him; nothing more effectual to silence all our fears and mistrusts, and to furnish us with strong consolation, than this, that he always appears in the presence of God for us; therefore the apostle puts a yea rather upon this, *Rom. viii. 34.* And see *Heb. vii. 25.*

4. He pleads the ill usage they were likely to meet with in the world for his sake, ver. 14. *I have given them thy word*, to be published to the world, and they have received it, have believed it themselves, and accepted the trust of transmitting it to the world, and therefore the world hath hated them, as also because they are not of the world, no more than I. Here we have,

1. The world's enmity to Christ's followers; while Christ was with them, though as yet they had given but little opposition to the world, yet it hates them, much more would it do so, when, by their more extensive preaching of the gospel, they would turn the world upside down. Father, stand their friend, saith Christ, for they are likely to have many enemies; let them have thy love, for the world's hatred is entailed upon them. In the midst of those fiery darts, let them be compassed with thy favour as with a shield; it is God's honour to take part with the weaker side, and to help the helpless. Lord, be merciful to them, for men would swallow them up.

2. The reasons of that enmity which strengthen the plea.

1. It is implied that one reason is, because they had received the word of God, as it was sent them by the hand of Christ, when the greatest part of the world rejected it, and set themselves against them, who were the preachers and professors of it. Note, They that receive Christ's good will, and good word, must expect the world's ill will, and ill word. Gospel ministers have been in a particular manner hated by the world, because they call men out of the world, and separate them from it, and teach them not to conform to it, and so condemn the world. Father, keep them, for it is for thy sake that they are exposed; they are sufferers for thee. Thus the psalmist pleads, *for thy sake I have born reproach*, *Psal. lxxix. 7.* Note, Those that keep the word of Christ's patience, are entitled to special protection in the hour of temptation, *Rev. iii.*

10. That cause which makes a martyr, may well make a joyful sufferer.

2. Another reason is more express; the world hates them, because they are not of the world. They to whom the word of Christ comes in power, are not of the world, for it has this effect upon all that receive it in the love of it, that it weans them from the wealth of the world, and turns them against the wickedness of the world, and therefore the world bears them a grudge.

5. He pleads their conformity to himself in a holy non-conformity to the world, ver. 16. Father, keep them, for they are of my spirit and mind, *they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*. They may in faith commit themselves to God's custody,

1. Who are as Christ was in this world, and tread in his steps. God will love those that are like Christ. 2. Who do not engage themselves in the world's interest, nor devote themselves to its service. Observe,

1. That Jesus Christ was not of this world; he never had been of it, and least of all, now he was upon the point of leaving it. This speaks, 1. His state, he was none of the world's favourites or darlings, none of its princes or grandees, worldly possessions he had none, *not where to lay his head*; nor worldly power, he was no judge or divider. 2. His spirit; he was perfectly dead to the world, the prince of this world had nothing in him; the things of this world were nothing to him; not honour, for he made himself of no reputation; not riches, for for our sakes he became poor; not pleasures, for he acquainted himself with grief. See *John viii. 23.*

2. That therefore true Christians are not of this world. The Spirit of Christ in them is opposite to the spirit of the world.

2. It is their privilege to be despised by the world; they are not in favour with the world, no more than their Master before them was.

1. It is their lot to be delivered from the world; as Abraham out of the land of his nativity. 3. It is their duty and character to be dead to the world. Their most pleasing converse is, and should be, with another world, and their prevailing concern about the business of that world, not of this. Christ's disciples were weak, and had many infirmities, yet this he could say for them, they were not of the world, not of the earth, and therefore he recommends them to the care of heaven.

17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

18. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. 19. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

The next thing he prayed for them is, that they might be sanctified; not only kept from evil, but made good.

First, Here is the petition, ver. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth, i. e. through thy word, for thy word is truth, it is true, it is truth it self. He desires they may be sanctified, both as Christians, and as ministers.

(1.) As Christians. Father, make them holy, and that will be their preservation, 1 *Thes. v. 23.* Observe here,

1. The grace desired; sanctification. The disciples were sanctified, for they were not of the world, yet he prays, Father, sanctify them, that is, 1. Confirm the work of sanctification in them, strengthen their faith, enflame their good affections, rivet their good resolutions. 2. Carry on that good work in them, and continue it; let the light shine more and more. 3. Compleat it, crown it with the perfection of holiness; sanctify them throughout, and to the end. Note, 1. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, that they may be sanctified; because he cannot for shame own them as his, either here or hereafter; ether employ them in his work, or present them to his Father, if they be not sanctified. 2. Those that through grace are sanctified, have need to be sanctified more and more. Even disciples must pray for sanctifying grace, for if he that was the author of the good work, be not the finisher of it, we are undone. Not to go forward is to go backward; he that is holy, must be holy still, more holy still, pressing forward, soaring upwards, as those that have not attained. 3. It is God that sanctifies, as well as God that justifies, 2 *Cor. v. 5.* 4. It is an encouragement to us in our prayers for sanctifying grace, that it is what Christ intercedes for, for us.

2. The means of conferring this grace, through thy truth, thy word is truth. Not that the holy one of Israel is hereby limited to means, but in the counsel of peace, among other things, it was settled and agreed, 1. That all needful truth should be comprized and summed up in the word of God. Divine revelation, as it now stands in the written word, is not only pure truth without mixture, but entire truth without deficiency. 2. That this word of truth should be the outward and ordinary means of our sanctification; not of it self, for then it would always sanctify, but as the instrument which the Spirit commonly useth in beginning and carrying on that good work; it is the seed of the new birth, 1 *Pet. i. 23.* and the food of the new life, 1 *Pet. ii. 1, 2.*

(2.) As ministers, sanctify them, i. e. set them apart for thy self and service; let their call to the apostleship be ratified in heaven



heaven. Prophets were said to be sanctified, *Jer. i. 5*. Priests and Levites were so. *Sanctify them, i. e.* 1. Qualify them for the office, with Christian graces, and ministerial gifts, to make them able ministers of the New Testament. 2. Separate them to the office, *Rom. i. 1*. I have called them, they have consented, Father, say *Amen* to it. 3. Own them in the office; let thy hand go along with them; *sanctify them by*, or *in truth*, as truth is opposed to figure and shadow; sanctify them really, not ritually and ceremonially, as the Levitical priests were, by anointing and sacrifice. *Sanctify them to thy truth*, the word of thy truth, to be the preachers of thy truth to the world; as the priests were sanctified to *serve at the altar*, so let them be to *preach the gospel*, *1 Cor. ix. 13, 14*. Note, 1. Jesus Christ intercedes for his ministers with a particular concern, and recommends to his Father's grace those stars he carries in his right hand. 2. The great thing to be asked of God for gospel ministers is, that they may be sanctified, effectually separated from the world, and entirely devoted to God, and experimentally acquainted with the influence of that word upon their own hearts, which they preach to others. Let them have the Urim and Thummim, light and integrity.

Secondly, We have here two pleas or arguments to enforce the petition for the disciples sanctification.

1. The mission they had from him, *ver. 18*. *As thou hast sent me into the world* to be thine ambassador to the children of men, so now I am recalled, *have I sent them into the world*, as my delegates. Now here,

(1.) Christ speaks with great assurance of his own mission. *Thou hast sent me into the world*. The great author of the Christian religion had his commission and instructions from him who is the original and object of all religion. He was sent of God to say what he said, and do what he did, and be what he is to those that believe on him; which was his comfort in his undertaking, and may be ours abundantly, in our dependence upon him; his record was on high, for thence his mission was.

(2.) He speaks with great satisfaction of the commission he had given his disciples. *So have I sent them*, on the same errand, and to carry on the same design; to preach the same doctrine that he had preached, and to confirm it with the same proofs, with a charge likewise to commit to other faithful men that which was committed to them. He gave them their commission, *John xx. 21*. with a reference to his own, and it magnifies their office, that it comes from Christ, and that there is some affinity between the commission given to the ministers of reconciliation, and that given to the Mediator; he is called an apostle, *Heb. iii. 1*. a minister, *Rom. xv. 8*. a messenger, *Mal. iii. 1*. only they are sent as servants, he as a son.

Now this comes in here as a reason, 1. Why Christ was concerned so much for them, and laid their case so near his heart; because he had himself put into a difficult office, which required great abilities for the due discharge of it. Note, Whom Christ sends he will stand by, and interest himself in those that are employed for him; what he call us out to, he will fit us out for, and bear us out in. 2. Why he committed them to his Father, because he was concerned in the cause; their mission being in prosecution of his, and as it were an assignment out of it. Christ received gifts for men, *Psal. lxviii. 18*. and then gave them to men, *Eph. iv. 8*. and therefore prays in aid of his Father to warrant and uphold those gifts, and confirm his grant of them. The Father sanctified him when he sent him into the world, chap. x. 36. Now they being sent as he was, let them also be sanctified.

2. The merit he had for them is another thing here pleaded, *ver. 19*. *For their sakes I sanctify myself*. Here is,

1. Christ's designation of himself to the work and office of mediator. *I sanctified myself*, i. e. he entirely devoted himself to the undertaking, and all the parts of it, especially that which he was now going about, the offering up of himself without spot unto God, by the eternal Spirit. He as the priest and altar sanctified himself as the sacrifice. When he said, Father, glorify thy name; and Father, thy will be done; and Father, I commit my spirit into thy hands, he paid down the satisfaction he had engaged to make, and so sanctified himself. This he pleads with his Father, for his intercession is made in the virtue of his satisfaction, by his own blood he entered into the holy place, *Heb. ix. 12*. As the high priest on the day of atonement sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice at the same time that he burnt incense within the veil, *Lev. xvi. 12, 14*.

2. Christ's design of kindness to his disciples herein. It is for their sakes, that they may be sanctified, that is, that they may be martyrs, so some. I sacrifice myself, that they may be sacrificed to the glory of God and the church's good. Paul speaks of his being offered, *2 Tim. iv. 6*. *Phil. ii. 17*. Whatever there is in the death of the saints, that is precious in the sight of the Lord, it is owing to the death of the Lord Jesus. But I rather take it more generally, that they may be saints and ministers duly qualified and accepted of God.

1. The office of the ministry is the purchase of Christ's blood, and one of the blessed fruits of his satisfaction, and owes its virtue and value to Christ's merit. The priests under the law were consecrated with the blood of bulls and goats, but gospel ministers with the blood of Jesus.

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2. The real holiness of all good Christians is the fruit of Christ's death, by which the gift of the holy Ghost was purchased; he gave himself for his church to sanctify it, *Eph. v. 26*. And he that designed the end, designed also the means, that they might be sanctified by the truth, the truth which Christ came into the world to bear witness to, and died to confirm. The word of truth receives its sanctifying virtue and power from the death of Christ. Some read it, that they may be sanctified in truth, i. e. truly; for as God must be served, so in order to that we must be sanctified in the spirit, and in truth. And this Christ has prayed for, for all that are his, for this is his will, even their sanctification, which encourages them to pray for it.

20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: 21. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one. 23. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Next to their purity, he prays for their unity, for the wisdom from above, is first pure, then peaceable; and amity is then amiable indeed, when it is like the ointment on Aaron's holy head, and the dew on Sion's holy hill. Observe,

First, Who are included in this prayer, *ver. 20*. not these only, not these only that are now my disciples, the eleven, the seventy, with others, men and women that followed him when he was here on earth, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, either preached by them in their own day, or written by them for the generation to come; I pray for them all, that they all may be one in their interest in this prayer, and may all receive benefit by it. Note, Here,

1. Those, and those only are interested in the mediation of Christ, that do, or shall believe in him. This is that by which they are described, and it comprehends all the character and duty of a Christian. They that lived then saw and believed, but they in after ages have not seen, and yet have believed.

2. It is through the word that souls are brought to believe on Christ, and it is for this end that Christ appointed the scriptures to be written, and a standing ministry to continue in the church, while the church stands, that is, while the world stands, for the raising up of a seed.

3. It is certainly and infallibly known to Christ who shall believe on him. He doth not here pray at a venture, upon a contingency depending on the treacherous will of man, which pretends to be free, but by reason of sin is in bondage with its children; no, Christ knew very well whom he prayed for, the matter was reduced to a certainty by the divine prescience and purpose; he knew who were given him, who being ordained to eternal life were entered in the Lamb's book, and should undoubtedly believe, *Acts xiii. 48*.

4. Jesus Christ intercedes not only for great and eminent believers, but for the meanest and weakest; not for these only that are to be employed in the highest posts of trust and honour in his kingdom, but for all, even those that in the eye of the world are inconsiderable. As the divine providence extends it self to the meanest creature, so doth the divine grace to the meanest Christian. The good shepherd has an eye even to the poor of the flock.

5. Jesus Christ in his mediation had an actual regard to those of the chosen remnant that were yet unborn, the people that should be created, *Psal. xxii. 31*. the other sheep which he must yet bring. Before they are formed in the womb he knows them, *Jer. i. 5*. and prayers are filed in heaven for them beforehand, by him who declareth the end from the beginning, and calleth things that are not as though they were.

Secondly, What is intended in this prayer, *ver. 21*. That they all may be one. The same before, *ver. 11*. That they may be one as we are. And again, *ver. 22*. The heart of Christ was much upon this. Some think that oneness prayed for, *ver. 11*. hath special reference to the disciples as ministers and apostles, that they might be one in their testimony to Christ; and the harmony of the evangelists, and concurrence of the first preachers of the gospel is owing to this prayer. Let them be not only of one heart, but one mouth, speaking the same thing. The unity of gospel ministers is both the beauty and strength of the gospel interest.

But it is certain the oneness prayed for, *ver. 21*. respects all believers. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, and we may be sure it is an answered prayer. That they all may be one, one in us, *ver. 21*. one as we are one, *ver. 22*. made perfect in one, *ver. 23*. It includes three things.

1. That they might all be incorporated in one body. Father, look upon them all as one, and ratify that great charter by which they are embodied as one church. Though they live in distant places, from one end of heaven to the other, and in several ages,



from the beginning to the close of time, and so cannot have any personal acquaintance or correspondence with each other, yet let them be united in me their common head. As Christ died, so he prayed to *gather them all in one*, John xi. 53. Eph. i. 10.

2. That they might all be *animated by one Spirit*. This is plainly implied in that, *that they may be one in us*. Union with the Father and Son is obtained and kept up only by the holy Ghost. *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Let them all be stamped with the same image and superscription, and influenced by the same power.

3. That they might all be *knit together* in the bond of love and charity, all of one heart. That they *all may be one*, 1. In judgment and sentiment, not in *every little thing*, it is neither possible nor needful, but in the great things of God, and in them by the virtue of his prayer they are all agreed; that God's favour is better than life; that sin is the worst of evils, Christ the best of friends; that there is another life after this; and the like. 2. In disposition and inclination. All that are sanctified have the same divine nature and image; they have all a new heart, and it is *one heart*. 3. They are all one in their designs and aims. Every true Christian, *as far as he is so*, eyes the glory of God as his *highest end*, and the glory of heaven as his *chief good*. 4. They are all one in their desires and prayers, though they differ in words, and the manner of expressions, yet having all received the same *Spirit of adoption*, and observing the same rule, they pray for the same things in effect. 5. All one in *love and affection*. Every true Christian has that in him which inclines him to love all true Christians as such. That which Christ here prays for, is that *communion of saints* which we profess to believe; the fellowship which all believers have with God, and their intimate union with all the saints in heaven and earth, 1 John i. 3. But this prayer of Christ will not have its compleat answer till all the saints come to heaven, for then, and not till then they shall be *perfect in one*, ver. 23. Eph. iv. 13.

Thirdly, What is intimated by way of plea or argument to enforce this petition; three things,

(1.) The oneness that is between the Father and the Son, which is mentioned again and again, ver. 11, 21, 22, 23.

1. It is taken for granted that the *Father and Son* are *one*, one in nature and essence, equal in power and glory, one in mutual endearments: The *Father loveth the Son*, and the Son always pleased the Father. They are one in design, and one in operation. The intimacy of this oneness is expressed in these words, *thou in me, and I in thee*. This he often mentions for his support under his present sufferings, when his enemies were ready to fall upon him, and his friends to fall off from him, yet he was *in the Father*, and the Father *in him*.

2. This is insisted on in Christ's prayer for his disciples oneness.

1. As the pattern of that oneness, shewing how he desired they might be one. Believers are one in some measure as God and Christ are one; for, (1.) The union of believers is a strict and close union; they are united by a divine nature, by the power of divine grace in pursuance of the divine counsels. (2.) It is a holy union, in the holy Spirit, for holy ends; not a body politick for any secular purpose. (3.) It is, and will be at last a complete union. Father and Son have the same attributes, properties, and perfections, so have believers now, as far as they are sanctified, and when grace shall be perfected in glory, they will be exactly consonant to each other, all changed into the same image.

2. As the centre of that oneness; that they may be *one in us*, all meeting here. There is *one God* and *one Mediator*, and herein believers are one, that they all agree to depend upon the favour of this one God as their felicity, and the merit of this one Mediator as their righteousness. That is a conspiracy, not a union, which doth not centre in *God as the end*, and *Christ as the way*. All that are truly united to God and Christ, who *are one*, will soon be *united one to another*.

3. As a plea for that oneness. The Creator and Redeemer are one in interest and design; but to what purpose are they so, if all believers were not one body with Christ, and did not *jointly* receive grace for grace *from him*, as he had received it *for them*? Christ's design was to reduce revolted mankind to God; Father, faith he, let all that believe be one, that *in one body* they may be reconciled, Eph. ii. 15, 16. which speaks of the uniting of Jews and Gentiles in the church; that great mystery, that the Gentiles should be *fellow-heirs*, and of the *same body*, Eph. iii. 6. to which I think this prayer of Christ principally refers, it being one great thing he aimed at in his dying; and I wonder none of the expositors I have met with do so apply it. Father, let the Gentiles that believe be incorporated with the believing Jews, and *make of twain one new man*.

Those words, *I in them, and thou in me*, shew what that union is which is so necessary, not only to the beauty, but to the very being of his church. 1. *Union with Christ, I in them*. Christ dwelling in the hearts of believers, is the life and soul of the new man. 2. *Union with God through him. Thou in me*, so as by me to be *in them*. 3. *Union with each other*, resulting from those, that they hereby may be *made perfect in one*. We are complete in

2. The design of Christ in all his communications of light and grace to them. Ver. 22. *The glory which thou gavest me*, as the trustee or chanel of conveyance, *I have accordingly given them*; to this intent, that they *may be one as we are one*; so that those gifts will be in vain, if they be not one. Now these gifts are either,

1. Those that were conferred upon the apostles, and first planters of the church. The glory of being God's ambassadors to the world; the glory of working miracles; the glory of gathering a church out of the world, and erecting the throne of God's kingdom among men; this glory was given to Christ, and some of the honour he put upon them when he sent them to *disciple all nations*.

Or, 2. Those that are given in common to all believers. The glory of being in covenant with the Father, and accepted of him; of being laid in his bosom, and designed for a place at his right hand, was the glory which the Father gave to the Redeemer, and he hath confirmed it to the Redeemed. 1. This honour he saith he *hath given them*, because he hath intended it for them, settled it upon them, and secured it to them upon their believing Christ's promises are real gifts. 2. This was *given him to give them*; it was conveyed to him in trust for them, and he was faithful to him that appointed him. 3. He gave it them that they *might be one*.

1. To entitle them to the privilege of unity, that by virtue of their common relation to *one God the Father*, and *one Lord Jesus Christ*, they might be truly denominated one. The gift of the Spirit, that great glory which the Father gave to the Son, by him to be given to all believers, makes them *one*, for he worketh *all in all*, 1 Cor. xii. 4, &c. 2. To engage them to the duty of unity. That in consideration of their agreement and communion in one creed, and one covenant, one Spirit, and one bible; in consideration of what they *have in one God*, and *one Christ*, and of what they *hope for* in one heaven, they may be of one mind, and one mouth. Worldly glory sets men at variance, for if some be advanced, others are eclipsed, and therefore, while the disciples dreamed of a *temporal kingdom*, they were ever and anon quarrelling, but spiritual honours being conferred alike upon all Christ's subjects, they being all *made to our God kings and priests*, there is no occasion for contest or emulation. The more Christians are taken up with the glory Christ has given them, the less desirous they will be of vainglory, and consequently the less disposed to quarrel.

3. He pleads the happy influence their oneness would have upon others, and the furtherance it would give to the publick good. This is twice urged, ver. 21. *That the world may believe that thou hast sent me*. And again, ver. 23. *That the world may know it*, for without knowledge there can be no true faith. Believers must know what they believe, and why and wherefore they believe it: They who believe *at a venture*, venture too far. Now Christ here shews,

1. His good will to the world of mankind in general. Herein he is of his Father's mind, as we are sure he is in every thing, that he would have all men to be saved, and to *come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9. Therefore it is his will that all means possible should be used, and no stone left unturned for the conviction and conversion of the world. We know not who are chosen, but we must in our places do our utmost to further mens salvation, and take heed of doing any thing to hinder it.

2. The good fruit of the church's oneness, it will be an evidence of the truth of Christianity, and a means of bringing many to embrace it.

1. In general, it will recommend Christianity to the world, and to the good opinion of those that are without.

(1.) The embodying of Christians in one society by the *gospel charter*, will greatly promote Christianity, when the world shall see so many of those that were its children, called out of its family, distinguished from others, and changed from what they themselves sometimes were; when they shall see this society raised by the foolishness of preaching, and kept up by miracles of divine providence and grace; and how admirably well it is modelled and constituted, they will be ready to say, *we will go with you*, for *we see that God is with you*.

(2.) The *uniting* of Christians in *love and charity* is the beauty of their profession, and invites others to join with them, as the love that was among those primo-primitive Christians, Acts ii. 42, 43.—iv. 32, 33. When Christianity, instead of causing quarrels about it self, makes all other strifes to cease, when it cools the fiery, smooths the rugged, and disposeth men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficent to all men; studious to preserve and promote peace in all relations and societies, this will recommend it to all that have any thing either of natural religion or natural affection in them.

2. In particular, it will beget in men good thoughts,

2. Of Christ. They will know and believe that *thou hast sent me*. By this it will appear that Christ was sent of God, and that his doctrine was divine; in that his religion prevails to join so many of different capacities, tempers and interests in other things, in one body by faith, with one heart by love: Certainly he was sent by the God of power, who fashioneth mens hearts alike, and the God



of love and peace; when the worshippers of God are one, he is one, and his name one.

2. Of Christians. They will know that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me. Here is, 1. The privilege of believers, the Father himself loveth them with a love resembling his love to his Son, for they are loved in him with an everlasting love. 2. The evidence of their interest in this privilege, and that is, their being one. By this it will appear that God loves us, if we love one another with a pure heart; for wherever the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, it will change it into the same image. See how much good it would do the world, to know better how dear to God all good Christians are! The Jews had a saying, *If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with pearls.* Those that have so much of God's love, should have more of ours.

24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. 25. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. 26. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

Here is, First, A petition for the glorifying all those that were given to Christ, ver. 24. not only these apostles, but all believers; *Father, I will that they may be with me.* Observe,

1. The connexion of this request with those foregoing. He had prayed that God would preserve, sanctify, and unite them; and now he prays that he would crown all his gifts with their glorification. In this method we must pray, first for grace, and then for glory, *Psal. lxxxiv. 11.* for in this method God gives. Far be it from the only wise God to come under the imputation, either of that foolish builder, that, without a foundation, built upon the sand, as he would, if he should glorify any, whom he has not first sanctified; or, of that foolish builder, who began to build, and was not able to finish, as he would, if he should sanctify any, and not glorify them.

2. The manner of the request, *Father, I will.* Here, as before, he addresseth himself to God as a Father, and therein we must do likewise; but when he saith, *θέλω, I will,* he speaks a language peculiar to himself, and such as doth not become ordinary petitioners, but very well became him who paid for what he prayed for.

(1.) It speaks the authority of his intercession in general; his word was with power in heaven, as well as on earth: He entering with his own blood into the holy place, his intercession there has an uncontrollable efficacy: He intercedes as a king, for he is a priest upon his throne, like Melchizedek, a king priest.

(2.) It speaks his particular authority in this matter; he had a power to give eternal life, ver. 2. and, pursuant to that power, he saith, *Father, I will.* Though now he took upon him the form of a servant, yet that power being to be most illustriously exerted when he shall come the second time in the glory of a judge, to say, *Come ye blessed,* having that in his eye, he might well say, *Father, I will.*

3. The request itself, that all the elect might come to be with him in heaven at last, to see his glory, and to share in it. Now observe here,

(1.) Under what notion we are to hope for heaven; wherein doth that happiness consist; three things make heaven:

1. It is to be where Christ is, where I am; in the paradise, whither Christ's soul went at death; in the third heavens, where his soul and body went at his ascension: — *Where I am,* am to be shortly, am to be eternally: In this world we are but in transitu, there we truly are where we are to be for ever; so Christ reckoned, and so must we.

2. It is to be with him where he is; this is no tautology, but intimates, that we shall not only be in the same happy place where Christ is, but that the happiness of the place will consist in his presence, that is the fulness of its joy: The very heaven of heaven is to be with Christ, there in company with him, and communion with him, *Phil. i. 21.*

3. It is to behold his glory, which the Father has given him. Observe,

(1.) The glory of the Redeemer is the brightness of heaven: That glory, before which angels cover their faces, was his glory, *John xii. 1.* The Lamb is the light of the new Jerusalem, *Rev. xxi. 23.* Christ will come in the glory of his Father, for he is the brightness of his glory: God shews his glory there, as he doth his grace here, through Christ. The Father has given me this glory, though he was as yet in his low estate, but it was very sure, and very near.

(2.) The felicity of the redeemed consists very much in the beholding of that glory; they will have the immediate view of his glorious person; *I shall see God in my flesh,* *Job xix. 26, 27.* They will have a clear insight into his glorious undertaking, as it will be then accomplished; they will see into those springs of love, from

whence flow all the streams of grace; they shall have an appropriating sight of Christ's glory, *Uxor fulget radiis mariti,* and an assimilating sight; they shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

(2.) Upon what ground we are to hope for heaven; no other but purely the mediation and intercession of Christ; because he hath said, *Father, I will.* Our sanctification is our evidence, for he that hath this hope in him, purifies himself; but it is the will of Christ, that is our title, by the which will we are sanctified, *Heb. x. 10.* Christ speaks here as if he did not count his own happiness complete unless he had his elect to share with him in it, for it is the bringing of many sons to glory that makes the captain of our salvation perfect, *Heb. ii. 10.*

4. The argument to back this request, *for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* This is a reason, 1. Why he expected this glory himself; thou wilt give it me, for thou lovedst me. The honour and power given to the Son as mediator, was founded in the Father's love to him, *John v. 20.* The Father loves the Son, is infinitely well pleased in his undertaking; and therefore has given all things into his hand; and the matter being concerted in the divine counsels from eternity, he is said to love him as mediator before the foundation of the world. Or, 2. Why he expected that those who were given him should be with him to share in his glory. Thou lovedst me, and them in me, and canst deny me nothing I ask for them.

Secondly, The conclusion of the prayer, which is designed to enforce all the petitions for the disciples, especially the last, that they may be glorified.

Two things he insists upon, and pleads:

(1.) The respect he had to his Father, ver. 25. Observe,

1. The title he gives to God, *O righteous Father.* When he prayed they might be sanctified, he calls him *holy Father*; when he prays they might be glorified, he calls him *righteous Father*; for it is a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give. God's righteousness was engaged for the giving out of all that good which the Father had promised, and the Son had purchased.

2. The character he gives of the world that lay in wickedness: *The world has not known thee.* Note, Ignorance of God overspreads the world of mankind, this is the darkness they sit in. Now this is urged here, 1. To shew that these disciples needed the aids of special grace, both because of the necessity of their work, they were to bring a world that knew not God to the knowledge of him; and also because of the difficulty of their work, they must bring light to those that rebelled against the light, therefore keep them. 2. To shew that they were qualified for further peculiar favours, for they had that knowledge of God which the world had not.

3. The plea he insists upon for himself, *but I have known thee.* Christ knew the Father so as no one else ever did, knew upon what grounds he went in his undertaking; knew his Father's mind in every thing, and therefore, in this prayer, came to him with confidence, as we do to one we know. Christ is here suing out blessings for those that were his; pursuing this petition, when he had said, *The world has not known thee,* one would expect it should follow, *but they have known thee*; no, their knowledge was not to be bragged of; *but I have known thee*; which intimates, that there is nothing in us to recommend us to God's favour, but all our interest in him, and intercourse with him, results from, and depends upon, Christ's interest and intercourse: We are unworthy, but he is worthy.

4. The plea he insists upon for his disciples, *and these have known that thou hast sent me*; and,

(1.) Hereby they are distinguished from the unbelieving world. When multitudes, to whom Christ was sent, and his grace offered, would not believe that God had sent him, these knew it, and believed it, and were not ashamed to own it. Note, To know and believe in Jesus Christ, in the midst of a world that persists in ignorance and infidelity, is highly pleasing to God, and shall certainly be crowned with distinguishing glory: Singular faith qualifies for singular favours.

(2.) Hereby they are interested in the mediation of Christ, and partake of the benefit of his acquaintance with the Father: *I have known thee,* immediately and perfectly; and those, though they have not so known thee, nor were capable of knowing thee so, yet they have known that thou hast sent me, have known that which was required of them to know, have known the Creator in the Redeemer. Knowing Christ as sent of God, they have, in him, known the Father, and are introduced to an acquaintance with him; therefore, Father, look after them for my sake.

(2.) The respect he had to his disciples, ver. 26. I have led them into the knowledge of thee, and will do it, yet more and more, with this great and kind intention, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them. Observe here,

1. What Christ had done for them; *I have declared unto them thy name.* (1.) This he had done for those that were his immediate followers: *All the time that he went in and out among them;* he made it his business to declare his Father's name to them, and to beget in them a veneration for it: The tendency of all his sermons and miracles, was to advance his Father's honour, and to spread the knowledge of him, *John i. 18.* (2.) This he hath done for all that believe on him; for they had not been brought to believe,



believe, if Christ had not made known to them his Father's name. Note, 1. We are indebted to Christ for all the knowledge we have of the Father's name, he declares it, and he opens the understanding to receive that revelation. 2. Those whom Christ recommends to the favour of God, he first leads into an acquaintance with God.

2. What he intended to do yet further for them; *I will declare it*. To the disciples he designed to give further instructions after his resurrection, *Acts i.* 3. and to bring them into a much more intimate acquaintance with divine things, by the pouring out of the Spirit after his ascension; and to all believers, into whose hearts he hath shined, he shines more and more. Where Christ has declared his Father's name, he will declare it; for to him that hath, shall be given; and they that know God, both need and desire to know more of him. This is fitly pleaded for them, Father, own and favour them, for they will own and honour thee.

3. What he aimed at in all this, not to fill their heads with curious speculations, and furnish them with something to talk of among the learned, but to secure and advance their real happiness in two things:

(1.) Communion with God: Therefore I have given them the knowledge of thy name, of all that whereby thou hast made thyself known, *that thy love*, even that *wherewith thou hast loved me*, may be, not only towards them, but *in them*; that is, 1. Let them have the fruits of that love for their sanctification; let the Spirit of love, with which thou hast filled me, be in them. Christ declares his Father's name to believers, that with that divine light darted into their minds, a divine love may be shed abroad in their hearts, to be in them a commanding, constraining principle of holiness, that they may partake of a divine nature. When God's love to us comes to be in us, it is like the virtue which the loadstone gives the needle, inclining it to move towards the pole; it draws out the soul towards God, in pious and devout affections, which are as the spirits of the divine life in the soul. 2. Let them have the taste and relish of that love for their consolation; let them not only be interested in the love of God, by having God's name declared to them, but, by a further declaration of it, let them have the comfort of that interest; may not only know God, but *know that they know him*, 1 John ii. 3. It is the love of God thus shed abroad in the heart that fills it with joy, *Rom. v. 3, 5*. This God has provided for, that we may not only be satisfied with his loving kindness, but satisfied of it; and so may live a life of complacency in God, and communion with him; this we must pray for, this we must press after; if we have it, we must thank Christ for it; if we want it, we may thank ourselves.

(2.) Union with Christ in order hereunto, *and I in them*. There is no getting into the love of God but through Christ, nor can we keep ourselves in that love but by abiding in Christ, that is, having him to abide in us; nor can we have the sense and apprehension of that love, but by our experience of the in-dwelling of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ in our hearts: It is Christ in us that is the only hope of glory that will not make us ashamed, *Col. i. 27*. All our communion with God, the reception of his love to us, and our return of love to him again, passeth through the hands of the Lord Jesus, and the comfort of both is owing purely to him. Christ had said but a little before, *I in them*, ver. 23. and here it is repeated again (though the sense was compleat without it) and the prayer closed with it, to shew how much the heart of Christ was set upon it; all his petitions centre in this, and with this the prayers of Jesus, the Son of David, are ended: *I in them*; let me have this, and I desire no more; it is the glory of the Redeemer to dwell in the redeemed; it is his rest for ever, and he has desired it. Let us therefore make sure our union with Christ, and then take the comfort of his intercession: This prayer had an end, but that he ever lives to make.

## C H A P. XVIII.

Hitherto this evangelist has recorded little of the history of Christ, only so far as was requisite to introduce his discourses; but now the time drew nigh that Jesus must die, he is very particular in relating the circumstances of his sufferings, and some which the other had omitted, especially his sayings. So far were his followers from being ashamed of his cross, or endeavouring to conceal it, that this was it, which, both by word and writing, they were most industrious to proclaim, and gloried in it. This chapter relates, 1. How Christ was arrested in the garden, and surrendered himself a prisoner, ver. 1,—12. 2. How he was abused in the high-priest's court, and how Peter, in the mean time, denied him, ver. 13,—27. 3. How he was prosecuted before Pilate, and examined by him, and put in election with Barabbas for the favour of the people, and left it, ver. 28,—40.

1. **W**HEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entred, and his disciples. 2. And Judas also which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his dis-

ciples. 3. Judas then having received a band of men, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons. 4. Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5. They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also which betrayed him, stood with them. 6. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground. 7. Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? and they said, Jesus of Nazareth. 8. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9. That the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none. 10. Then Simon Peter having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priests servant, and cut off his right ear. The servants name was Malchus. 11. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? 12. Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

The hour was now come that the captain of our salvation, who was to be made perfect by sufferings, should engage the enemy. We have here his entrance upon the encounter. The day of recompence is in his heart, and the year of his redeemed is come, and his own arm works the salvation, for he has no second. Let us turn aside now and see this great sight.

First, Our Lord Jesus, like a bold champion, takes the field first, ver. 1, 2. When he had spoken these words, preached the sermon, prayed his prayer, and so finished his testimony, he would lose no time, but went forth immediately out of the house, out of the city, by moon-light, for the passover was observed at the full moon, with his disciples, the eleven (for Judas was otherwise employed) and he went over the brook Cedron, which runs between Jerusalem, and the mount of Olives, where was a garden, not of his own, but some friend's, who allowed him the liberty of it. Observe,

1. That our Lord Jesus entered upon his sufferings when he had spoken these words, as, *Matt. xxvi. 1*. When he had finished these sayings. Here it is intimated,

(1.) That our Lord Jesus took his work before him. The office of the priest was to teach and pray, and offer sacrifice: Christ, after teaching and praying, applies himself to make atonement. Christ had said all he had to say as a prophet, and now he addresseth himself to the discharge of his office as a priest, to make his soul an offering for sin; and when he had gone through that, he entered upon his kingly office.

(2.) That having, by his sermon, prepared his disciples for this hour of trial, and, by his prayer, prepared himself for it, he then courageously went out to meet it: When he had put on his armour, he entered the lists, and not till then. Let those that suffer according to the will of God, in a good cause, with a good conscience, and having a clear call to it, comfort themselves with this, that Christ will not engage those that are his in any conflict, but he will first do that for them which is necessary to prepare them for it; and if we receive Christ's instructions and comforts, and be interested in his intercession, we may, with an unshaken resolution, venture through the greatest hardships in the way of duty.

2. That he went forth with his disciples. Judas knew what house he was in in the city, and he could have stayed and met his sufferings there; but,

(1.) He would do as he was wont to do, and not alter his method, either to meet the cross; or to miss it, when his hour was come. It was his custom when he was at Jerusalem, after he had spent the day in publick work, to retire at night to the mount of Olives, there his quarters were, in the skirts of the city, for they would not make room for him in the palaces, in the heart of the town. This being his custom, he would not be put out of his method by the foresight of his sufferings, but, as Daniel, did then just as he did aforetime, *Dan. vi. 10*.

(2.) He was as unwilling there should be an uproar among the people, as his enemies were, for it was not his way to strive or cry. If he had been seized in the city, and a tumult raised thereby, mischief might have been done, and a deal of blood shed, and therefore he withdrew. Note, When we find ourselves involved in trouble, we should be afraid of involving others with us. It is no disgrace to the followers of Christ to fall tamely. They who aim at honour from men, value themselves upon a resolution to sell their lives as dear as they can; but they who know their blood is precious to Christ, and not a drop of it shall be shed, but upon a valuable consideration, need not stand upon such terms.

(3.) He would set us an example in the beginning of his passion, as he did at the end of it, of retirement from the world. Let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach, *Heb. xiii. 13*. We must lay aside, and leave behind, the crowds, and cares, and comforts of cities, even holy cities, if we would cheerfully take up our cross, and keep up our communion with God therein.

3. That



3. That he went over the brook Cedron; he must go over that to go to the mount of Olives; but the notice taken of it intimates, that there was something in it significant; and it points, 1. At David's prophecy concerning the Messiah, *Psal. cx. 7.* that he shall drink of the brook in the way; the brook of suffering, in the way to his glory, and our salvation, signified by the brook Cedron; the black brook, so called, either from the darkness of the valley it run through, or the colour of the water, tainted with the dirt of the city; such a brook Christ drank of, when it lay in the way of our redemption, and therefore shall he lift up the head, his own and ours. 2. At David's pattern as a type of the Messiah: In his flight from Absalom, particular notice is taken of his passing over the brook Cedron, and going up by the ascent of mount Olivet weeping, and all that were with him in tears too, *2 Sam. xv. 23, 30.* The Son of David being driven out by the rebellious Jews, who would not have him to reign over them, and Judas, like Ahithophel, being in the plot against him, passed over this brook in meanness and humiliation, attended by a company of true mourners. The godly kings of Judah had burnt and destroyed the idols they found at the brook Cedron, *Ala, 2 Chron. xv. 16.* Hezekiah, *2 Chron. xxx. 14.* Josiah, *2 Kings xxiii. 4, 6.* into that brook the abominable things were cast. Christ, being now made sin for us, that he might abolish it, and take it away, began his passion by the same brook. Mount Olivet, where Christ began his sufferings, lay on the east-side of Jerusalem; mount Calvary, where he finished them, on the west; for in them he had an eye to such as should come from the east and the west.

4. That he entered into a garden. This circumstance is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that Christ's sufferings began in a garden. In the garden of Eden sin began, there the curse was pronounced, there the Redeemer was promised, and therefore in a garden that promised seed entered the lifts with the old serpent: Christ was buried also in a garden. 1. Let us when we walk in our gardens, take occasion from thence to meditate on Christ's sufferings in a garden, to which we owe all the pleasure we have in our gardens, for by them the curse upon the ground for man's sake was removed. 2. When we are in the midst of our possessions and enjoyments, we must keep up an expectation of troubles; for our gardens of delight are in a vale of tears.

5. That he had his disciples with him, 1. Because he used to take them with him when he retired for prayer. 2. They must be witnesses of his sufferings, and his patience under them, that they might with the more assurance and affection preach them to the world, *Luke xxiv. 48.* and be prepared to suffer themselves. 3. He would take them into the danger, to shew them their weakness, notwithstanding the promises they had made of fidelity. Christ sometimes brings his people into difficulties, that he may magnify himself in their deliverance.

6. That Judas, the traitor, knew the place, knew it to be the place of his usual retirement, and, by some word Christ had dropt, probably, knew that he intended to be there that night, for want of a better closet. A solitary garden is a proper place for meditation and prayer, and, after a passover, a proper time to retire for private devotion, that we may pray over the impressions made, and the vows renewed, and clench the nail.

Mention is made of Judas's knowing the place,

(1.) To aggravate the sin of Judas, that he would betray his Master, notwithstanding the intimate acquaintance he had with him; nay, and that he would make use of his familiarity with Christ, as giving him an opportunity of betraying him; a generous mind would have scorned to do so base a thing! Thus hath Christ's holy religion been wounded in the house of its friends, so as it could not have been wounded any where else. Many an apostate could not have been so profane as he is, if he had not been a professor; could not have ridiculed scriptures and ordinances, if he had not known them.

(2.) To magnify the love of Christ, that though he knew where the traitor would seek him, thither he went to be found of him, now he knew that his hour was come. Thus he shewed himself willing to suffer and die for us: What he did was not by constraint, but by consent; though as man he said, *Let this cup pass away*; as mediator he said, *Lo, I come*; I come with a good will. It was late in the night, we may suppose it eight or nine a'clock, when Christ went out to the garden; for it was not only his meat and drink, but his rest and sleep, to do the will of him that sent him: When others were going to bed, he was going to pray, going to suffer.

Secondly, The captain of our salvation having taken the field, the enemy presently comes upon the spot, and attacks him, *ver. 3.* Judas, with his men, comes thither, commissioned by the chief priests, especially those among them that were Pharisees, who were the most bitter enemies to Christ. This evangelist passeth over Christ's agony, because the other three had fully related it, and presently introduceth Judas and his company that came to seize him. Observe,

(1.) The persons employed in this action, a band of men, and officers from the chief priests, with Judas.

1. Here is a multitude engaged against Christ, a band of men, *σπῆρα*, cohorts; a regiment, a Roman band, which, some think, was five hundred men, others, a thousand. Christ's friends were

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few, his enemies many. Let us therefore not follow a multitude to do evil, nor fear a multitude designing evil to us, if God be for us.

2. Here is a mixed multitude; the band of men were Gentiles, Roman soldiers; a detachment out of the guards, that were posted in the tower of Antonia, to be a curb upon the city; the officers of the chief priests, *ὑπηρέτας*, either their domestick servants, or the officers of their courts, were Jews; these had an enmity to each other, but were united against Christ, who came to reconcile both to God in one body.

3. It is a commissioned multitude; not a popular tumult; no, they have received orders from the chief priests, upon whose suggestion to the governor that this Jesus was a dangerous man, it is likely, they had a warrant from him too to take him up, for they feared the people. See what enemies Christ and his gospel have had, and are likely to have, numerous and potent, and therefore formidable: Ecclesiastical and civil powers combined against them; *Psal. ii. 1, 2.* Christ said it would be so, *Matt. x. 18.* and found it so.

4. All under the conduct of Judas; he received this band of men, it is likely he desired it, telling them how necessary it was to send a good force, and being as ambitious of the honour of commanding in chief in this expedition, as he was covetous of the wages of this unrighteousness. He thought himself bravely preferred from coming in the rear of the contemptible twelve, to be placed in the head of these formidable hundreds; he never made such a figure before, and promised himself, perhaps, that this should not be the last time, but he should be rewarded with a captain's commission, or better, if he succeeded well in this enterprize.

(2.) The preparation they had made for an attack, they came with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

1. If he should abscond, though they had moon-light, they would have occasion for their lights; but they might have spared these; the second Adam was not driven, as the first was, to hide himself, either for fear or shame, among the trees of the garden: It was folly to light a candle to seek the sun by.

2. If he should resist, they would have occasion for their arms; the weapons of his warfare were spiritual, and at those weapons he had often beaten them, and put them to silence, and therefore they have now recourse to other weapons, swords and staves.

Thirdly, Our Lord Jesus gloriously repulsed the first onset of the enemy, *ver. 4, 5, 6.* where observe,

1. How he received them with all the mildness imaginable towards them, and all the calmness imaginable in himself.

(1.) He met them with a very soft and mild question, *ver. 4.* Knowing all things that should come upon him, and therefore not at all surprized with this alarm, with a wonderful intrepidity and presence of mind, undisturbed and undaunted, he went forth to meet them, and, as if he had been unconcerned, softly asked, *Whom seek ye?* What is the matter? What means this bustle at this time of night? See here, 1. Christ's foresight of his sufferings; he knew all those things that should come upon him, for he had obliged himself to suffer them; unless we had strength, as Christ had, to bear the discovery, we should not covet to know what shall come upon us; it would but anticipate our pain; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Yet it will do us good to expect sufferings in general, so as that when they come we may say, it is but what we looked for, the cost we sat down and counted upon. 2. Christ's forwardness to his sufferings, he did not outrun them, but went out to meet them, and reached forth his hand to take the bitter cup. When the people would have forced him to a crown, and offered to make him a king in Galilee, he withdrew, and hid himself, *John vi. 15.* but when they came to force him to a cross, he offered himself; for he came to this world to suffer, and went to the other world to reign. This will not warrant us needlessly to expose ourselves to trouble, for we know not when our hour is come; but then we are called to suffering, when we have no way to avoid it but by sin; and when it comes to that, let none of these things move us, for they cannot hurt us.

(2.) He met them with a very calm and mild answer, when they told him whom they were in quest of, *ver. 5.* They said, *Jesus of Nazareth*; and he said, *I am he.*

1. It should seem, their eyes were held that they could not know him. It is highly probable, that many of the Roman band, however the officers of the temple, had often seen him, at least to satisfy their curiosity; however, Judas to be sure knew him well enough, and yet none of them could pretend to say, *Thou art the man we seek.* Thus he shewed them the folly of bringing lights to see for him, for he could make them not to know him, when they saw him; and hath shewed us how easily he can infatuate the counsels of his enemies, and make them lose themselves when they are seeking mischief.

2. In their enquiries for him they called him *Jesus of Nazareth*, which was the only title they knew him by, and, probably, he was so called in their warrant: It was a name of reproach given him to darken the evidence of his being the Messiah: By this it appears they knew him not, whence he was; for if they had known, surely they would not have persecuted him.

3. He fairly answers them, *I am he.* He did not improve the advantage he had against them by their blindness, as Elifha did against the Syrians, telling them, *This is not the way, neither is this*



this the city; but improves it as an opportunity of shewing his willingness to suffer. Though they called him *Jesus of Nazareth*, he answered to the name, for he despised the reproach; he might have said, *I am not he*, for he was *Jesus of Bethlehem*; but he would by no means allow equivocations: He has hereby taught us to own him, whatever it cost us; not to be *ashamed of him, or his words*; but, even in difficult times, *to confess Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner*. *I am he*, *Εγώ ειμι*, *I am he*, is the glorious name of the blessed God, *Exod. iii. 14.* and the honour of that name is justly challenged by the blessed Jesus.

4. Particular notice is taken in a parenthesis that *Judas stood with them*: He that used to stand with them that followed Christ, now stood with those that fought against him. This describes an apostate; he is one that changes sides, he herds himself with those with whom his heart always was, and with whom he shall have his lot in the judgment day. This is mentioned, 1. To shew the impudence of Judas. One would wonder where he got the confidence with which he now faced his Master, and *was not ashamed, neither could he blush*; Satan, in his heart, gave him a whore's forehead. 2. To shew that Judas was particularly aimed at in the power which went along with that word, *I am he*, to foil the aggressors; was an arrow levelled at the traitor's conscience, and pierced him to the quick; for Christ's coming, and his voice, will be, of all sinners, most terrible to apostates, and betrayers of him.

2. See how he terrified them, and obliged them to retire, *ver. 6.* *They went backward, and, like men thunder-struck, fell to the ground*. It should seem, they did not fall forwards, as humbling themselves before him, and yielding to him, but backwards, as standing it out to the utmost: Thus Christ was declared to be more than a man, even then when he was trampled upon as a worm, and no man. This word, *I am he*, had revived his disciples, and raised them up, *Matt. xiv. 27.* but the same word strikes his enemies down. Hereby he shewed plainly,

(1.) What he could have done with them; when he struck them down, he could have struck them dead; when he spoke them *to the ground*, he could have spoke them to hell, and have sent them, like Korah's company, the next way thither; but he would not do so, 1. Because *the hour of his suffering was come*, and he would not put it by; only shew that his life was not forced from him, but *he laid it down of himself*, as he had said. 2. Because he would give an instance of his patience and forbearance with the worst of men, and his compassionate love to his very enemies: In striking them down, and no more, he gave them both a call to repent, and space to repent; but *their hearts were hardened*, and all was in vain.

(2.) What he will do at last with all his implacable enemies, *that will not repent to give him glory; they shall see, they shall fall before him*. Now the scripture was accomplished, *Psal. xxi. 12.* *Thou shalt make them turn their back*, and *Psal. xx. 8.* and it will be accomplished more and more; *with the breath of his mouth he will slay the wicked*, 2 *Thess. ii. 8.* *Rev. xix. 21.* *Quid judicaturus faciet, qui judicandus hoc facit?* Aug.

Fourthly, Having given his enemies a repulse, he gives his friends a protection, and that by his word too, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* where we may observe,

1. How he continued to expose himself to their rage, *ver. 7.* They did not lie long where they fell, but, by divine permission, got up again; it is only in the other world that God's judgments are everlasting. When they were down, one would have thought Christ should have made his escape; when they were up again, one would have thought they should have let fall their pursuit; but still we find, 1. They are as eager as ever to seize him. It is in some confusion and disorder that they recover themselves, cannot imagine what ailed them that they could not keep their ground, but will impute it to any thing rather than Christ's power. Note, There are hearts so very hard in sin, that nothing will work upon them to reduce and reclaim them. 2. He is as willing as ever to be seized. When they were fallen before him, he did not insult over them, but, seeing them at a loss *asked them the same question, Whom seek ye?* And they gave him the same answer, *Jesus of Nazareth*. In his repeating the question, he seems to come yet closer to their consciences; Do ye not know *whom ye seek?* Are you not aware that you are in an error, and do not meddle with your match? Have you not had enough of it, but will you try the other struggle? *Did ever any harden his heart against God and prosper?* In their repeating the same answer, they shewed an obstinacy in their wicked way; they still call him *Jesus of Nazareth* with as much disdain as ever, and Judas as unrepenting as any of them. *Let us therefore fear, lest, by a few bold steps at first in a sinful way, our hearts be hardened.*

2. How he contrived to secure his disciples from their rage: He improved this advantage against them, for the protection of his followers; when he shews his courage with reference to himself, *I have told you that I am he*; he shews his care for his disciples, *Let these go their way*: He speaks this as a command to them, rather than a contract with them; for they lay at his mercy, not he at theirs: He chargeth them therefore as *one having authority*; *Let these go their way*; it is at your peril if you meddle with them. This aggravated the sin of the disciples in forsaking him, and particularly Peter's in denying him, that Christ had given them this

pass or warrant of protection, and yet they had not faith and courage enough to rely upon that, but betook themselves to such base and sorry shifts for their security. When Christ said, *Let these go their way*, he intended,

(1.) To manifest his affectionate concern for his disciples; when he exposed himself, he excused them, because they were not as yet fit to suffer; their faith was weak, and their spirits low, and it would have been as much as their souls, and the lives of their souls were worth, to bring them into sufferings now: *New wine must not be put into old bottles*. And besides, they had other work to do; they must *go their way*, for they are to go into all the world to preach the gospel; *Destroy them not, for a blessing is in them*. Now herein, 1. Christ gives us a great encouragement to follow him; for though he has allotted us sufferings, yet he considers our frame, will wisely time the cross, and proportion it to our strength, and *will deliver the godly out of temptation*, either from it, or through it. 2. He gives us a good example of love to our brethren, and concern for their welfare: We must not consult our own ease and safety only, but others as well as our own, and, in some cases, more than our own: There is a generous and heroic love, which will enable us to *lay down our lives for the brethren*, 1 *John iii. 16.*

(2.) He intended to give a specimen of his undertaking as mediator: When he offered himself to suffer and die, it was that we might escape: He was our *ἀντι-λύχος*, a sufferer in our stead; when he said, *Lo, I come*; he said also, *Let these go their way*; like the ram offered instead of Isaac.

3. Now herein he confirmed the word which he had spoken a little before, *chap. xvii. 12.* *Of them which thou gavest me, I have lost none*. Christ, by fulfilling that word in this particular, gave an assurance that it should be accomplished in the full extent of it, not only for them that were now with him, but for all that should believe on him through their word. Though Christ's keeping of them was meant especially of the preservation of their souls from sin and apostasy, yet it is here applied to the preservation of their natural lives, and very fitly, for even the body was a part of Christ's charge and care, he is to *raise it up at the last day*, and therefore to preserve that as well as *the spirit and soul*, 1 *Thess. v. 23.* 2 *Tim. iv. 17, 18.* Christ will preserve the natural life for the service to which it is designed; it is given him to be used for him, and he will not lose the service of it, but will be magnified in it, *whether by life, or death*; it shall be held in life, as long as any use is to be made of it; Christ's witnesses shall not die, till they have given in their evidence: But that is not all, this preservation of the disciples was, in the tendency of it, a spiritual preservation; they were now so weak in faith and resolution, that, in all probability, if they had been called out to suffer at this time, they would have shamed themselves and their Master, and some of them, at least the weaker of them, would have been lost; that therefore he might *lose none*, he would not expose them. The safety and preservation of the saints, is owing not only to the divine grace in proportioning the strength to the trial, but to the divine providence in proportioning the trial to the strength.

Fifthly, Having provided for the safety of his disciples, he rebukes the rashness of one of them, and represseth the violence of his followers, as he had repulsed the violence of his persecutors, *ver. 10, 11.* where we have,

1. Peter's rashness: He had a sword, it is not likely he wore one constantly as a gentleman, but they had two swords among them all, *Luke xxii. 28.* and Peter was intrusted with one, and *he drew it*, for now, if ever, he thought it was time to use it, and *he smote one of the high priest's servants*, who, it is likely, was one of the forwardest, and aiming, it is likely, to cleave him down the head, missed his blow, and only *cut off his right ear*: *The servant's name*, for the greater certainty of the narrative, is recorded; it was *Malchus*, or *Malluch*, *Neh. x. 4.*

(1.) We must here acknowledge Peter's good will; he had an honest zeal for his Master, though now misguided; he had lately promised to venture his life for him, and would now make his words good: Probably, it exasperated Peter to see Judas at the head of this gang, his baseness excited Peter's boldness, and I wonder, when he did draw his sword, he did not aim at his head.

(2.) Yet we must acknowledge *Peter's ill conduct*; and though his good intention did excuse, yet it would not justify him. 1. He had no warrant from his Master for what he did, Christ's soldiers must wait the *word of command*, and not out-run it, and before they expose themselves to sufferings, must see to it not only that their cause be good, but their call clear. 2. He transgressed the duty of his place, and *resisted the powers that were*, which Christ had never countenanced, but forbidden, *Mat. v. 39.* *that ye resist not evil*. 3. He opposed his Master's suffering, and notwithstanding the rebuke he had for it once, is ready to repeat, *Master, spare thy self*; suffering be *far from thee*; though Christ had told him he must and would suffer, and that his hour was now come; thus while he seemed to fight for Christ he fought against him.

4. He broke the capitulation his Master had lately made with the enemy; when he said, *let these go their way*, he not only intended for their safety, but in effect *passed his word for their good behaviour*, that they should *go away peaceably*; this Peter heard, and yet would not be *bound by*. As we may be guilty of a sinful cowardise



cowardise when we are called to appear, so we may be of a sinful forwardness, when we are called to retire. 5. He foolishly exposed himself and his fellow disciples to the fury of this enraged multitude; if he had cut off Malchus's head when he cut off his ear, we may suppose the soldiers would have fallen upon all the disciples, and hewed them to pieces, and would have represented Christ as no better than Barabbas. Thus many have been guilty of self-destruction in their zeal for self-preservation. 6. Peter payed the coward so soon after this denying his Master, that we have reason to think he would not have done this, but that he saw his Master *beat them down to the ground*, and then he could deal with them, but when he saw him surrender himself notwithstanding, his courage failed him then; whereas the true Christian hero will appear in the cause of Christ, not only when it is prevailing, but when it seems to be declining; will be on the right side, though it be not the rising side.

3. We must acknowledge God's over-ruling providence, in directing the stroke, so that it should do no more execution, but only *cut off his ear*, which was rather *marking* him than *maiming* him. As also in giving Christ an opportunity to manifest his power and goodness in healing the hurt, *Luke xxii. 51*. Thus what was in danger of turning to Christ's reproach, proved an occasion of that which redounded much to his honour, even among his adversaries.

2. The rebuke his Master gave him, *ver. 11. Put up thy sword into the sheath*, or scabbard; it is a gentle reproof, because it was his zeal that carried him beyond the bounds of discretion; he did not aggravate the matter, only bid him *do so no more*. Many think when they are in grief and distress it will excuse them, if they be hot and hasty with those about them; but Christ has here set us an example of *meekness* in *sufferings*. Peter must put up his sword, for it was the *sword of the Spirit* that was to be committed to him; *weapons of warfare not carnal*, yet *mighty*. When Christ with a word felled the aggressors, he shewed Peter how he should be armed with a *word, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword*, and with that not long after this, he laid Ananias and Sapphira dead at his feet.

3. The reason for this rebuke. *The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?* Matthew relates another reason Christ gave for this rebuke, but John preserves this which he had omitted; in which Christ gives us,

1. A full proof of his own submission to his Father's will; of all that was amiss in what Peter did, he seems to resent nothing so much as that he would have hindered his sufferings now his *hour was come*; what? (*Peter*) wilt thou step in between the *cup* and the *lip*? *Get thee hence, Satan*. If Christ be determined to suffer and die, it is presumption for Peter in word or deed to oppose it. *Shall I not drink it?* The manner of expression speaks a settled resolution, and that he would not entertain a thought to the contrary. He was willing to drink of *this cup*, though it was a bitter cup, an infusion of the *wormwood* and the *gall*; the cup of trembling, a bloody cup, the *dregs of the cup of the Lord's wrath*, *Isa. li. 22*. yet he drank it, that he might put into our hands the cup of salvation, the cup of consolation, the cup of blessing; and therefore he is willing to drink it, because *his Father put it into his hand*. If his Father will have it so, it is for the best, and be it so.

2. A fair pattern to us of submission to God's will, in every thing that concerns us. We must *pledge Christ* in the *cup* that he *drank of*, *Mat. xx. 23*. and must argue ourselves into a compliance. 1. It is but a *cup*; a small matter comparatively, be it what it will. It is not a sea, a red sea, a dead sea, for it is not hell; it is light, and but for a moment. 2. It is a cup that is *given us*; sufferings are *gifts*. 3. It is given us by a *Father*; who has a Father's authority, and doth us no wrong; a Father's affection, and means us no hurt.

Sixthly, Having entirely reconciled himself to the dispensation, he calmly surrendered and yielded himself a prisoner, not because he could not have made his escape, but because he would not. One would have thought the cure of Malchus's ear should have made them relent, but nothing would win upon them. *Maledictus furor, quem nec majestas miraculi nec pietas beneficii confringere potuit*. Anselm. Observe here,

1. How they seized him. They took *Jesus*. Only *some few* of them could lay hands on him, but it is charged upon them all, for they were all aiding and abetting; in treason there are no accessaries; all are principals. *Now the scripture was fulfilled*, bulls have compassed me, *Psal. xxii. 12*. compassed me like bees, *Psal. cxviii. 12*. *The breath of our nostrils is taken in their pit*, *Lam. iv. 20*. They had so often been frustrated in their attempts to seize him, that now they had got him into their hands, we may suppose, they flew upon him with so much the more violence.

2. How they secured him; they *bound him*. This particular of his sufferings is taken notice of only by this evangelist, that as soon as ever he was taken he was bound, *pinioned, hand-cuffed*; tradition saith, they bound him with such cruelty, that the blood started out at his fingers ends. And that having bound his hands behind him, they clapt an iron chain about his neck, and with that dragged him along. See *Gerhard. Harm. cap. v*.

1. This speaks the spite of his persecutors. They bound him; 1. That they might torment him, and put him to pain, as they bound Sampson to afflict him. 2. That they might disgrace him; and put him to *shame*; slaves were bound, so was Christ, though free-born. 3. That they might prevent his escape, Judas having bidden them *hold him fast*. See their folly! that they should think to fetter that power which had but just now proved it self omnipotent! 4. They bound him as one *already condemned*, for they were resolved to prosecute him to the death; and that he should *die as a fool dieth*, i. e. as a malefactor, with his *hands bound*, *2 Sam. iii. 33, 34*. Christ had bound the consciences of his persecutors, with the power of his word, which galled them, and to be revenged on him, they laid these bonds on him.

2. Christ's being *bound* was very *significant*; in this as in other things there was a mystery. 1. Before they bound him, he had *bound himself* by his own undertaking to the work and office of a mediator; he was already bound to the horns of the altar with the cords of his own love to man, and duty to his Father, else their cords would not have held him. 2. We were *bound with the cords of our iniquities*, *Prov. v. 22*. with the *yoke of our transgressions*, *Lam. i. 14*. Guilt is a bond on the soul, by which we are *bound over* to the judgment of God; corruption is a bond on the soul, by which we are *bound under* the power of Satan. Christ being made sin for us to free us from those bonds, himself submitted to be bound for us, else we had been bound hand and foot, and reserved in *chains of darkness*. To his bonds we owe our liberty, his confinement was our enlargement; thus the Son *makes us free*. 3. The types and prophecies of the Old Testament were herein accomplished; Isaac was bound that he might be sacrificed; Joseph was bound, and the *irons entered into his soul*, in order to his being brought from prison to reign, *Psal. cv. 18*. Sampson was bound in order to his slaying more of the Philistines at his death than he had done in his life. And the Messiah was prophesied of as a prisoner, *Isa. liii. 8*. 4. Christ was bound, that he might bind us to duty and obedience. His bonds for us are bonds upon us, by which we are for ever *obliged to love him, and serve him*. Paul's salutation to his friends, is Christ's to us all, *remember my bonds*, (*Col. iv. 18*.) remember them as bound with him from all sin, and to all duty. 5. Christ's bonds for us were designed to make our bonds for him easy to us, if at any time we be so called out to suffer for him, to sanctify and sweeten them, and put honour upon them; these enabled Paul and Silas to sing in the stocks, and Ignatius to call his bonds for Christ spiritual pearls. *Epist. ad Ephes.*

13. And led him away to Annas first (for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.) 14. Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. 15. ¶ And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. 16. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this mans disciples? He saith, I am not. 18. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold) and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. 19. ¶ The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. 21. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. 22. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? 23. Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? 24. (Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest) 25. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself: They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. 26. One of the servants of the high priest (being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off) saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? 27. Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew.



We have here an account of Christ's arraignment before the high priest, and some passages that occurred therein, which were omitted by the other evangelists; and Peter's denying of him, which the other evangelists had given the story of entire by it self, is interwoven with the other passages. The crime laid to his charge, having relation to religion, the judges of the spiritual court took it to fall directly under their cognizance; both Jews and Gentiles seized him, and so both Jews and Gentiles tried and condemned him, for he died for the sins of both. Let us go over the story in order.

First, Having seized him they led him away to Annas first, before they brought him to the court that was set, expecting him in the house of Caiaphas, *ver. 1.*

1. They led him away, led him in triumph, as a trophy of their victory; led him as a lamb to the slaughter, and they led him through the sheep-gate spoken of, *Neh. iii. 1.* for through that they went from the mount of Olives into Jerusalem. They hurried him away with violence, as if he had been the worst and vilest of malefactors. We had been led away of our own impetuous lusts, and led captive by Satan at his will, and that we might be rescued, Christ was led away, led captive by Satan's agents and instruments.

2. They led him away to their masters that sent them; it was now about midnight, and one would think they should have put him in ward, *Lev. xxiv. 12.* should have led him to some prison, till it was a proper time to call a court; but he is hurried away immediately, not to the justices of peace to be committed, but to the judges to be condemned; so extremely violent was the prosecution, partly because they feared a rescue, which they would thus not only leave no time for, but give a terror to; partly, because they greedily thirsted after Christ's blood, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.

3. They led him to Annas first; probably his house lay in the way, and was convenient for them to call at to refresh themselves, and, as some think, to be paid for their service. I suppose Annas was old and infirm, and could not be present in council with the rest, at that time of night, and yet earnestly desired to see the prey: To gratify him therefore with the assurance of their success, that the old man might sleep the better, and to receive his blessing for it, they produce their prisoner before him. It is sad to see them that are old and sickly, when they cannot commit sin as formerly, taking pleasure in them that do. Dr. Lightfoot thinks Annas was not present, because he was to attend early that morning in the temple, to examine the sacrifices which were that day to be offered, whether they were without blemish; if so, there was a significance in it, that Christ the great sacrifice was presented to him, and sent away bound, as approved and ready for the altar.

4. This Annas was father-in-law to Caiaphas the high priest; this kindred by marriage between them, comes in as a reason, either why Caiaphas ordered that this piece of respect should be done to Annas, to favour him with the first sight of the prisoner; or, why Annas was willing to countenance Caiaphas in a matter his heart was so much upon. Note, Acquaintance and alliance with wicked people is a great confirmation to many in their wicked ways.

Secondly, Annas did not long detain them, being as willing as any of them to have the prosecution pushed on, and therefore sent him bound to Caiaphas to his house, which was appointed for the rendezvous of the Sanhedrin upon this occasion; or to the usual place in the temple, where the high priest kept his court; this is mentioned, *ver. 24.* but our translators intimate in the margin, that it should come in here, and accordingly read it there, *Annas had sent him.* Observe here,

1. The power of Caiaphas, intimated, *ver. 13.* He was high priest that same year. The high priest's commission was during life; but there were now such frequent changes by the Simoniacal artifices of aspiring men with the government, that it was become almost an annual office, a presage of its final period approaching; while they were undermining one another, God was over-turning them all that he might come, whose right it was. Caiaphas was high priest that same year, when Messiah was to be cut off, which intimates, 1. That when an ill thing was to be done by a high priest, according to the fore-knowledge of God, providence so ordered it, that an ill man should be in the chair to do it. 2. That when God would make it to appear what corruption there was in the heart of a bad man, he put him into a place of power, where he had temptation and opportunity to exert it. It was the ruin of Caiaphas that he was high priest that year, and so became a ring-leader in the putting of Christ to death. Many a man's advancement has lost him his reputation, and he had not been dishonoured, if he had not been preferred.

2. The malice of Caiaphas, which is intimated, *ver. 14.* by the repeating of what he had said some time before, that right or wrong, guilty or innocent, it was expedient that one man should die for the people, which refers to the story, *John xi. 50.* This comes in here, to shew, 1. What an ill man he was; this was that Caiaphas that governed himself and the church by rules of policy, in defiance of the rules of equity. 2. What ill usage Christ was likely to meet with in his court, when his case was adjudged before

it was heard, and they were already resolved what to do with him; he must die; so that his trial was a jest. Thus the enemies of Christ's gospel are resolved, true or false, to run it down. 3. It is a testimony to the innocency of our Lord Jesus, from the mouth of one of his worst enemies, who owned that he fell a sacrifice to the publick good, and that it was not just he should die, but expedient only.

3. The concurrence of Annas in the prosecution of Christ. He made himself a partaker in guilt, 1. With the captain and officers, that without law or mercy had bound him, for he approved it by continuing him bound, when he should have loosed him, he not being convicted of any crime, nor having attempted an escape. If we do not what we can to undo what others have ill done, we are accessaries, *ex post facto.* It was more excusable in the rude soldiers to bind him, than in Annas, that should know better things, to continue him bound. 2. With the chief priest and council that condemned him and prosecuted him to death. This Annas was not present with them, yet thus he wished them good speed, and became a partaker of their evil deeds.

Thirdly, In the house of Caiaphas, Simon Peter began to deny his Master, *ver. 15,—18.*

1. It was with much ado, that Peter got into the hall, where the court was set, an account of which we have, *ver. 15, 16.* where we may observe,

1. Peter's kindness to Christ, which (though it proved no kindness) appeared in two things. 1. That he followed Jesus when he was led away; though at first he fled with the rest, yet afterwards he took heart a little, and followed at some distance; calling to mind the promises he had made to adhere to him whatever it cost him. They that had followed Christ in the midst of his honours, and shared with him in those honours, when the people cried *Hosanna* to him, ought to have followed him now in the midst of his reproaches, and to have shared with him in those. They that truly love and value Christ, will follow him all weathers, and all ways. 2. When he could not get in where Jesus was in the midst of his enemies, he stood at the door without, willing to be as near him as he could, and waiting for an opportunity to get nearer. Thus when we meet with opposition in following Christ, we must shew our good will. But yet this kindness of Peter's was no kindness, because he had not strength and courage enough to persevere in it, and so as it proved, he did but run himself into a snare; and even his following Christ, considering all things, was to be blamed; because Christ who knew him better than he knew himself, had expressly told him, *chap. xiii. 36. Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now;* and had told him, again and again, he would deny him; and he had lately had experience of his own weakness in forsaking him. Note, We must take heed of tempting God, by running upon difficulties beyond our strength, and venturing too far in a way of suffering. If our call be clear to expose ourselves, we may hope that God will enable us to honour him; but if it be not, we may fear that God will leave us to shame ourselves.

2. The other disciple's kindness to Peter, which yet, as it proved, was no kindness neither. St. John several times in this gospel speaking of himself as another disciple, many interpreters have been led by that to fancy that this other disciple here was John; and many conjectures they have how he should come to be known to the high priest; *propter generis nobilitatem*, saith *Jerom, Epitaph. Marcel.* as if he were a better gentleman born than his brother James, when they were both the sons of Zebedee the fisherman; some will tell you he had sold his estate to the high priest; others that he supplied his family with fish, which are vere improbable. But I see no reason to think that this other disciple was John, or one of the twelve, other sheep Christ had which were not of the fold, and this might be, as the Syriac reads it, *unus ex discipulis aliis*, one of those other disciples that believed in Christ, but resided at Jerusalem, and kept their places there; perhaps Joseph of Arimathea, or Nicodemus, known to the high priest, but not known to him to be disciples of Christ. Note, As there are many who seem disciples, and are not so; so there are many that are disciples and seem not so. There are good people hid in courts, even Nero's; as well as hid in crowds. We must not conclude a man to be no friend to Christ, merely because he has acquaintance and conversation with those that are his known enemies.

Now, 1. This other disciple, whoever he was, shewed a respect to Peter in introducing him, not only to gratify his curiosity and affection, but to give him an opportunity of being serviceable to his Master upon his trial, if there were occasion. Those that have a real kindness for Christ and his ways, though their temper may be reserved, and their circumstances lead them to be cautious and retired; yet if their faith be sincere when they are called to it, they will discover which way their inclination lies, by being ready to do a professed disciple a good turn. Peter perhaps had formerly introduced this disciple into conversation with Christ, and now he requites his kindness, and is not ashamed to own him, though it should seem he looked but sneakingly.

2. But this kindness proved no kindness, nay a great diskindness; by letting him into the high priest's hall, he let him into temptation, and the consequence was ill. Note, The courtesies of our friends often prove a snare to us, through a misguided affection.



2. Peter being got in, was immediately assaulted with the temptation, and foiled by it, *ver. 17.* Observe here, 1. How slighty the attack was. It was a silly maid, of so small account, that she was only set to keep the door, that challenged him, and she only asked him carelessly, *art not thou one of this man's disciples?* probably suspecting it by his sheepish look, and coming in timorously. We should many a time better maintain a good cause, if we had a good heart on it, and could put a good face on it. Peter had had some reason to take the alarm, if Malchus had set upon him, and had said, this is he that cut off my ear, and I will have his head for it; but when a maid only asked him, *art not thou one of them?* he might without danger have answered, *and what if I am?* Suppose the servants had ridiculed him, and insulted over him upon it, those can bear but little for Christ that cannot bear that; that is but *running with the foot-man.*

2. How speedy the surrender was; without taking time to recollect himself, he suddenly answered, *I am not.* If he had had the boldness of the lion, he would have said, it is my honour that I am so; or if he had had the wisdom of the serpent, he would have kept silence at this time, for it was *an evil time.* But all his care being for his own safety, he thought he could not secure that but by a peremptory denial, *I am not;* he not only denies it, but even *disdains* it, and *scorns her words.*

3. Yet he goes further into the temptation, *ver. 18.* *And the servants and officers stood there, and Peter with them.*

1. See how the servants made much of themselves; the night being cold, they made a fire in the hall, not for *their masters*, they were so eager in prosecuting Christ, that they forgot cold; but for themselves, to refresh themselves. They cared not what came of Christ, all their care was to sit and warm themselves, *Amos vi. 6.*

2. See how Peter herded himself with them, and made one among them. *He sat and warmed himself.*

1. It was a fault bad enough, that he did not attend his Master, and appear for him at the upper end of the hall, where he was now under examination. He might have been a witness for him, and have confronted the false witnesses that swore against him, if his Master had called him; however he might have been a witness to him, might have taken exact notice of what passed, that he might relate it to the other disciples, who could none of them get in to hear the trial; he might have learned by his Master's example how to carry himself, when it should come to his turn to suffer thus; yet neither his conscience nor his curiosity could bring him into the court, but he sits by, as if, like Gallio, he cared for none of these things. And yet at the same time we have reason to think his heart was full of grief and concern as it could hold, but he had not the courage to own it. *Lord, lead us not into temptation.*

2. It was much worse, that he joined himself with those that were his Master's enemies; *he stood with them and warmed himself;* that was a poor excuse for joining with them. A little thing will draw those into bad company, that will be drawn to it by the love of a good fire. If Peter's zeal for his Master had not frozen, but had continued in the heat it seemed to be of but a few hours before, he had not had occasion to warm himself now. Peter was much to be blamed,

1. Because he associated himself with these wicked men, and kept company with them. Doubtless they were diverting themselves with this night's expedition, scoffing at Christ, at what he had said, at what he had done, and triumphing in their victory over him; and what sort of entertainment would this give to Peter? If he said as they said, or by silence gave consent, he involved himself in sin; if not, he exposed himself to danger. If Peter had not so much courage as to appear publicly for his Master, yet he might have had so much devotion as to retire into a corner, and weep in secret for his Master's sufferings, and his own sin in forsaking him; if he could not have done good, he might have kept out of the way of doing hurt. It is better abscond than appear to no purpose, or ill purpose.

1. Because he desired to be thought one of them, that he might not be suspected to be a disciple of Christ, Is this Peter? What a contradiction is this to the prayer of every good man, *gather not my soul with sinners.* Saul among the prophets is not so absurd as David among the Philistines. They that deprecate the lot of the scornful hereafter, should dread the *seat of the scornful* now. It is ill warming ourselves with those with whom we are in danger of burning ourselves, *Psal. cxli. 4.*

Fourthly, Peter, Christ's friend; having begun to deny him, the high priest, his enemy, begins to accuse him, or rather urges him to accuse himself, *ver. 19, 20, 21.* It should seem the first attempt was to prove him a seducer and a teacher of false doctrine, which this evangelist relates, and when they failed in the proof of that, then they charged him with blasphemy, which is related by the other evangelists, and therefore omitted here. Observe,

1. The articles or heads upon which Christ was examined, *ver. 19.* concerning his disciples and his doctrine. Observe,

1. The irregularity of the process; it was against all law and equity; they seize him as a criminal, and now he is their prisoner, they have nothing to lay to his charge; no libel, no prosecutor; but the judge must himself be the prosecutor, and the prisoner himself.

self the witness, and against all reason and justice is put on to be his own accuser.

1. The intention. *The high priest then, ōv, therefore* which seems to refer to *ver. 14.* because he had resolved that Christ must be sacrificed to their private malice, under colour of the publick good, therefore he examined him upon those interrogatories, which would touch his life. He examined him,

1. Concerning his disciples, that he might charge him with sedition, and represent him as dangerous to the Roman government; as well as to the Jewish church. He asked him who were his disciples? What number they were? Of what country? What were their names and characters? Insinuating that his scholars were designed for soldiers, and would in time become a formidable body. Some think his question concerning his disciples was, what was now become of them all, where were they? And why did they not appear? upbraiding him with their cowardise in deserting him; thus adding to the affliction of it. There was something significant in this, that Christ's calling and owning his disciples, was the first thing laid to his charge, for it was *for their sakes* that he sanctified himself and suffered.

2. Concerning his doctrine, that they might charge him with heresy, and bring him under the penalty of the law against false prophets, *Deut. xiii. 9, 10.* This was a matter properly conusable in that court, *Deut. xvii. 12.* therefore a prophet could not perish but at Jerusalem, where that court sat. They could not prove any false doctrine upon him; but they hoped to extort something from him, which they might distort to his prejudice, and to make him an offender for some word or other, *Isa. xxix. 21.* They said nothing to him concerning his miracles, by which he had done so much good, and proved his doctrine beyond contradiction, because of these they were sure they could take no hold. Thus the adversaries of Christ, while they are industriously quarrelling with his truth, wilfully shut their eyes against the evidences of it, and take no notice of them.

2. The appeal Christ made in answer to these interrogatories:

1. As to his disciples he said nothing; because it was an impertinent question; if his doctrine was found and good, his having disciples, to whom to communicate it, was no more than what was practised and allowed by their own doctors. If Caiaphas in asking him concerning his disciples, designed to ensnare them, and bring them into trouble, it was in kindness to them that he said nothing of them, for he had said, *let these go their way.* If he meant to upbraid him with their cowardise, no wonder he said nothing, for *pudet hæc opprobria nobis, & dici potuisse, & non potuisse refelli;* he would say nothing to condemn them, and could say nothing to justify them.

2. As to his doctrine he said nothing in particular, but, in general referred himself to those that heard him, being not only made manifest to God, but made manifest also in their consciences, *ver. 20, 21.*

1. He tacitly charges his judges with illegal proceedings; he doth not indeed speak evil of the rulers of the people, nor say now to these princes, ye are wicked; but he appeals to the settled rules of their own court, whether they had dealt fairly by him? *Do ye indeed judge righteously?* *Psal. lviii. 1.* So here, *why ask ye me?* Which implies two absurdities in judgment, 1. *Why ask ye me now* concerning my doctrine, when you have already condemned it? They had made an order of court for the excommunicating of all that owned him, *chap. ix. 22.* had issued out a proclamation for the apprehending of him, and now they come to ask what his doctrine is? Thus was he condemned, as his doctrine and cause commonly are, unheard. 2. *Why ask ye me?* Must I accuse my self, when you have no evidence against me?

2. He insists upon his fair and open dealing with them in the publication of his doctrine, and justifies himself with that. The crime which the Sanhedrin by the law was to enquire after, was the clandestine spreading of dangerous doctrines, inticing secretly, *Deut. xiii. 6.* As to this therefore Christ clears himself very fully.

1. As to the manner of his preaching, he spake openly, *παρρησια* with freedom and plainness of speech; he did not deliver things ambiguously, as Apollo did his oracles; those that would undermine the truth, and spread corrupt notions, do it by fly insinuations, putting queries, starting difficulties, and asserting nothing; but Christ explained himself fully with, *Verily, verily I say unto you;* his reproofs were free and bold, and his testimonies express against the corruptions of the age.

2. As to the persons he preached to; he spake to the world, i. e. to all that had ears to hear, and were willing to hear him, high or low, learned or unlearned, Jew or Gentile, friend or foe; his doctrine feared not the censure of a mixt multitude; nor did he grudge the knowledge of it to any, as the masters of some rare invention commonly do, but freely communicated it, as the sun doth his beams.

3. As to the places he preached in; when he was in the country, he preached ordinarily in the synagogues, the places of meeting for worship, and on the sabbath-day, the time of meeting; when he came up to Jerusalem, he preached the same doctrine in the temple, at the time of the solemn feasts; when the Jews



from all parts assembled there ; though he often preached in private houses, and on mountains, and by the sea-side, to shew that his word and worship were not to be confined to temples and synagogues, yet what he preached in private, was the very same with what he delivered publickly. Note, The doctrine of Christ purely and plainly preached, need not be ashamed to appear in the most numerous assembly, for it carries its own strength and beauty along with it. What Christ's faithful ministers say, they would be willing all the world should hear ; wisdom cries in the places of concourse, *Prov. i. 21.—viii. 3.—ix. 3.*

4. As to the doctrine it self ; he said nothing in secret contrary to what he said in publick, but only by way of repetition and explication. *In secret have I said nothing* ; as if he had been either suspicious of the truth of it, or conscious of any ill design in it. He sought no corners, for he feared no colours, nor said any thing that he need be ashamed of ; what he did speak in private to his disciples, he ordered them to proclaim on the house-tops, *Mat. x. 27.* God faith of himself, *Isa. xlv. 19. I have not spoken in secret* ; his commandment is not hidden, *Deut. xxx. 11.* And the righteousness of faith speaks in like manner, *Rom. x. 5. Veritas nihil metuit nisi abscondi.* Tertul.

3. He appeals to those that had heard him, and desires they might be examined what doctrine he had preached, and whether it had that dangerous tendency that was surmized. *Ask them that heard me, what I said unto them* ; some of them may be in court, or may be sent for out of their beds ; he means not his friends and followers, who might be presumed to speak in his favour ; but ask any impartial hearer ; ask your own officers ; some think he pointed to them, when he said, *behold, they know what I said*, referring to the report which they had made of his preaching, *chap. vii. 46. Never man spake like this man.* Nay, you may ask some upon the bench, for, it is probable, some of them had heard him, and been put to silence by him. Note, The doctrine of Christ may safely appeal to all that know it, and has so much right and reason on its side, that they who will judge impartially cannot but witness to it.

Fifthly, While the judges were examining him, the servants that stood by were abusing him, *ver. 22, 23.*

1. It was a base affront which one of the officers gave him ; though he spoke with so much calmness and convincing evidence, this insolent fellow struck him with the palm of his hand, probably on the side of his head or face, saying, *answerest thou the high priest so ?* As if he had behaved himself rudely to the court.

1. He struck him, ἔδωκε πατίσματα, he gave him a blow. Some think it signifies a blow with a rod, or wand, from παλός, or with the staff, which was the badge of his office. Now the scripture was fulfilled, *Isa. l. 6. I gave my cheeks, εἰς πατίσματα* ; so the Seventy, to blows, the word here used. And *Mic. v. 1. They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek* ; and the type answered, *Job xvi. 10. They have smitten me on the cheek reproachfully.* It was unjust to strike one that neither said nor did amiss ; it was insolent for a mean servant to strike one that was confessedly a person of account ; it was cowardly to strike one that had his hands tied, and barbarous to strike a prisoner at the bar. Here was a breach of the peace in the face of the court, and yet the judges countenanced it. Confusion of face was our due ; but Christ here took it to himself ; upon me be the curse, the shame.

2. He checked him in a haughty, imperious manner, *answerest thou the high priest so ?* As if the blessed Jesus were not good enough to speak to his Master, or not wise enough to know how to speak to him, but like a rude and ignorant prisoner, must be controlled by the jailor, and taught how to behave himself.

Some of the ancients suggest that this officer was Malchus who owed to Christ the healing of his ear, and the saving of his head, and yet made him this ill return. But whoever it was, it was done to please the high priest, and to curry favour with him ; for what he said speaks a jealousy for the dignity of the high priest. Wicked rulers will not want wicked servants, who will help forward the affliction of those whom their masters persecute. There was a successor of this high priest that commanded the by-standers to smite Paul thus on the mouth, *Acts xxiii. 2.* Some think this officer took himself to be affronted by Christ's appeal to those about him concerning his doctrine, as if he would have vouched him to be a witness, and, perhaps, he was one of those officers that had spoken honourably of him, *John vii. 47.* and lest he should now be thought a secret friend to him, he thus appears a bitter enemy.

2. Christ bore this affront with wonderful meekness and patience, *ver. 23. If I have spoken evil, in what I have now said, bear witness of the evil.* Observe it to the court, and let them judge of it, who are the proper judges ; but if well, and as it did become me, why smitest thou me ? Christ could have answered him with a miracle of wrath, could have struck him dumb or dead, or have withered the hand that was lifted up against him. But this was the day of his patience and suffering, and he answered him with the meekness of wisdom, to teach us not to avenge ourselves ; not to render railing for railing, but with the innocency of the dove, to bear injuries, even then when with the wisdom of the serpent, as our Saviour, we shew the injustice of them, and appeal to the

magistrate concerning them. Christ did not here turn the other cheek, by which it appears that that rule, *Mat. v. 39.* is not to be understood literally ; a man may possibly turn the other cheek, and yet have his heart full of malice ; but comparing Christ's precept with his pattern, we learn, 1. That in such cases we must not be our own avengers, nor judges in our own case ; we must rather receive than give the second blow, which makes the quarrel ; we are allowed to defend ourselves, but not to avenge ourselves, the magistrate (if it be necessary for the preserving of the publick peace, and the restraining and terrifying of evil-doers) is to be the avenger, *Rom. xiii. 4.* 2. Our resentment of injuries done us must always be rational, and never passionate ; such Christ's here was ; when he suffered he reasoned, but threatened not. He fairly expostulated with him that did him the injury, and so may we. 3. When we are called out to suffering, we must accommodate ourselves to the inconveniences of a suffering state, with patience, and by one indignity done us be prepared to receive another ; and to make the best of it.

Sixthly, While the servants were thus abusing him, Peter was proceeding to deny him, *ver. 25, 26, 27.* It is a sad story, and none of the least of Christ's sufferings.

1. He repeated the sin the second time, *ver. 25.* While he was warming himself with the servants, as one of them, they asked him, *art not thou one of his disciples ?* What dost thou here among us ? He perhaps hearing that Christ was examined about his disciples, and fearing he should be seized, or at least smitten as his Master was, if he should own it, flatly denied it, and said, *I am not.*

1. It was his great folly, to thrust himself into the temptation, by continuing in the company of those that were unsuitable for him, and that he had nothing to do with. He stayed to warm himself ; but they that warm themselves with evil-doers, grow cold towards good people, and good things ; and they that are fond of the devil's fire-side, are in danger of the devil's fire. Peter might have stood by his Master at the bar, and have warmed himself better than here, at the fire of his Master's love, which many waters could not quench, *Cant. viii. 6, 7.* He might there have warmed himself with zeal for his Master, and indignation at his persecutors ; but he chose rather to warm with them, than to warm against them. But how could one (one disciple) be warm alone ? *Eccl. iv. 11.*

2. It was his great unhappiness that he was again assaulted by the temptation ; and no other could be expected, for this was a place, this an hour of temptation. When the judge asked Christ about his disciples, probably the servants took the hint, and challenged Peter for one of them, answer to thy name. See here, 1. The subtilty of the tempter in running down one whom he saw falling, and mustering a greater force against him ; not a maid now, but all the servants. Note, Yielding to one temptation invites another, and, perhaps, a stronger ; Satan redoubles his attacks when we give ground. 2. The danger of bad company. We commonly study to approve ourselves to those with whom we chuse to associate ourselves ; their good word we value ourselves by, and covet to stand right in their opinion. As we chuse our people we chuse our praise, and govern ourselves accordingly ; and are therefore concerned to make the first choice well, and not to mingle ourselves with those whom we cannot please without displeasing God.

3. It was his great weakness, nay, it was his great wickedness, to yield to the temptation, and to say, *I am not* one of his disciples, as one ashamed of that which was his honour, and afraid of suffering for it, which would have been yet more his honour. See how the fear of man brings a snare. When Christ was admired and caressed, and treated with respect, Peter pleased himself, and perhaps prided himself in this, that he was a disciple of Christ, and so put in for a share in the honours done his Master ; but thus many who seem fond of the reputation of religion when it is in fashion, are ashamed of the reproach of it ; but we must take it for better and worse.

2. He repeated the sin the third time, *ver. 26, 27.* Here he was attacked by one of the servants, that by the same token was kinsman to Malchus, and when he hears Peter deny himself to be a disciple of Christ, gives him the lye with a great assurance, *did not I see thee in the garden with him ?* Witness my kinsman's ear : Peter then denied again, as if he knew nothing of Christ, nothing of the garden, nothing of all this matter.

1. This third assault of the temptation was more close than the former ; before his relation to Christ was only suspected, here it is proved upon him by one that saw him with Jesus, and saw him draw his sword in his defence. Note, They who by sin think to help themselves out of trouble, do but entangle and embarrass themselves the more. Dare to be brave, for truth will out. A bird of the air may, perhaps, tell the matter, which we seek to conceal with a lye. Notice is taken of this servant's being a kinsman to Malchus, because that circumstance would make it the more a terror to Peter ; now, thinks he, I am gone, my business is done, there needs no other witness or prosecutor. We should not, if we can help it, make any man in particular our enemy, because the time may come when either he, or some of his relations, may have us at their mercy : He that may need a friend, should not make



make a foe. But observe, though here was sufficient evidence against Peter, and sufficient provocation given by his denial, to have prosecuted him, yet he escapes, has no harm done him, nor attempted to be done. Note, We are often drawn into sin by groundless, causeless fears, which there is no occasion for, and which a small degree of wisdom and resolution would make nothing of.

2. His yielding to it was no less base than the former: *He denied again*. See here, 1. The nature of sin in general; *the heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of it*, Heb. iii. 13. It was a strange degree of effrontery that Peter was arrived to on a sudden, that he could with such assurance stand in a lye against so clear a disproof; but *the beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water*, when once the fence is broke, men easily go from bad to worse. 2. Of the sin of lying in particular; it is a fruitful sin, and upon that account *exceeding sinful*; one lye needs another to support it, and that another: It is a rule in the devil's politicks, *male facta male factis tegere, ne perpluant*.

3. The hint given him for the awakening of his conscience was seasonable and happy; *immediately the cock crew*; and this is all that is here said of his repentance, it being recorded by the other evangelists: This brought him to himself, by bringing to his mind the words of Christ. See here, 1. The care Christ has of those that are his, notwithstanding their follies; though *they fall, they are not utterly cast down, not utterly cast off*. 2. The advantage of having faithful remembrancers near us, that though they cannot tell us more than we know already, yet may mind us of that which we know, but have forgotten. The crowing of the cock to others was an accidental thing, and had no significancy; but to Peter it was the voice of God, and had a blessed tendency to awaken his conscience, by putting him in mind of the word of Christ.

28. ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas, unto the hall of judgment: and it was early, and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled: but that they might eat the passover. 29. Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring you against this man? 30. They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32. That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. 33. Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? 34. Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thy self, or did others tell it thee of me? 35. Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: What hast thou done? 36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice. 38. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. 39. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews? 40. Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

We have here an account of Christ's arraignment before Pilate, the Roman governor, in the *prætorium* (a Latin word made Greek) the prætor's house, or *hall of judgment*; thither they hurried him, to get him condemned in the Roman court, and executed by the Roman power. Being resolved on his death, they took this course, 1. That he might be put to death the more legally and regularly, according to the present constitution of their government, since they became a province of the empire; not stoned in a popular tumult, as Stephen, but put to death with the present formalities of justice. Thus *he was treated as a malefactor, being made sin for us*. 2. That he might be put to death the more safely. If they could engage the Roman government in the matter, which the people stood in awe of, there would be little danger of an uproar. 3. That he might be put to death with more reproach to himself. *The death of the cross*, which the Romans commonly used, being of all other the most ignominious, they were desirous by it to put an indelible mark of infamy upon him, and so to sink his reputation for ever. This therefore they harped upon, *Crucify him*.

4. That he might be put to death with less reproach to them. It was an invidious thing to put one to death that had done so much good in the world, and therefore they were willing to throw the odium upon the Roman government, to make that the less acceptable to the people, and save themselves from the reproach. Thus many are more afraid of the scandal of an ill thing, than of the sin of it. See *Acts* v. 28.

Two things are here observed concerning the prosecution:

1. Their policy and industry in the prosecution; *it was early*; some think, about two or three in the morning; others, about five or six; when most people were in their beds; and so there would be the less danger of opposition from the people that were for Christ; while, at the same time, they had their agents about, to call those together, whom they could influence to cry out against him. See how much their heart was upon it, and how violent they were in the prosecution! now they had him in their hands, they would lose no time till they had him upon the cross; but denied themselves their natural rest to push on this matter! See *Micah* ii. 1.

2. Their superstition and vile hypocrisy; *the chief priests and elders*, though they came along with the prisoner, that the thing might be done effectually, yet *they went not into the judgment-hall*, because it was the house of an uncircumcised Gentile, lest they should be defiled, but kept out of doors, that they might eat the passover, not the paschal lamb, that was eaten the night before, but the passover feast, upon the sacrifices which were offered on the fifteenth day, the *Chagigah*, as they called it, the *passover bullocks*, spoken of *Deut.* xvi. 2. 2 *Chron.* xxx. 24. — xxxv. 8, 9. These they were to eat of, and therefore would not go into the court for fear of touching a Gentile, and thereby contracting, not a legal, but only a traditional pollution: This they scrupled, but made no scruple of breaking through all the laws of equity to persecute Christ to the death: *They strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel*.

Let us now see what passed at the judgment-hall: Here is,

First, Pilate's conference with the prosecutors, they are called first, and heard what they had to say against the prisoner, as was very fit, *ver.* 29, — 32.

(1.) The judge calls for the indictment. Because they would not come into the hall, he went out to them into the court before the house, to talk with them. Looking upon Pilate as a magistrate, that we may give every one his due, here are three things commendable in him:

1. His diligent and close application to business. If it had been upon a good occasion, it had been very well that he was willing to be called up early to the judgment-seat. Men in publick trusts must not love their ease.

2. His condescension to the humour of the people, and receding from the honour of his place to gratify their scruples. He might have said, if they be so nice as not to come in to me, let them go home as they came; by the same rule as we might say, if the complainant scruple to put off his hat to the magistrate, let not his complaint be heard; but Pilate insists not upon it, bears with them, and goes out to them; for when it is for good, we should become all things to all men.

3. His adherence to the rule of justice in demanding the accusation, suspecting the prosecution to be malicious: *What accusation bring ye against this man?* What is the crime you charge him with, and what proof have ye of it? It was a law of nature, before Valerius Publicola made it a Roman law: *Ne quis indicta causa condemnatur*. See *Acts* xxv. 16, 17. It is unreasonable to commit a man, without alledging some cause in the warrant; and much more to arraign a man, when there is no bill of indictment found against him.

(2.) The prosecutors demand judgment against him, upon a general surmise that he was a criminal, not alledging, much less proving, any thing in particular *worthy of death, or of bonds*, *ver.* 30. *If he were not a malefactor, or evil-doer, we would not have delivered him to thee* to be condemned. This speaks them,

1. Very rude and uncivil to Pilate, a parcel of ill-natured men, that affected to despise dominion. When Pilate was so compliant to them, as to come out to treat with them, yet they were to the highest degree out of humour with him. He put the most reasonable question to them that could be, but if it had been the most absurd, they could not have answered him with more disdain.

2. Very spiteful and malicious towards our Lord Jesus, right or wrong, they will have him to be a malefactor, and treated as one. We are to presume a man innocent till he is proved guilty; but they will presume him guilty who could prove himself innocent: They cannot say he is a traitor, a murderer, a felon, a breaker of the peace, but an evil-doer. He an evil-doer, who went about doing good! Let those be called whom he had cured, and fed, and taught; whom he had rescued from devils, and raised from death; and let them be asked whether he were an evil-doer or no? Note, It is no new thing for the best of benefactors to be branded and run down as the worst of malefactors.

3. Very proud and conceited of themselves, and their own judgment and justice, as if their delivering a man up under the general character of a malefactor, were sufficient for the civil magistrate



strate to ground a judicial sentence upon, than which what could be more haughty?

(3.) The judge remanded him to their own court, *ver. 31. Take ye him and judge him according to your own law*, and do not trouble me with him. Now,

1. Some think Pilate herein complimented them, acknowledging the remains of their power, and allowing them to exert it. Corporal punishment they might inflict, as *scourging in their synagogues*; but whether capital, or no, is uncertain; but, faith Pilate, go as far as *your law* will allow you, and if you go further, it shall be connived at. This he said, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, but unwilling to do them the service they required.

2. Others think, he bantered them, and upbraided them with their present state of weakness and subjection: They would be the sole judges of the guilt; pray, faith Pilate, if you will be so, go on as you have begun; you have found him guilty by *your own law*, condemn him, if you dare, by *your own law*, to carry on the humour. Nothing is more absurd, nor more deserves to be exposed, than for those to pretend to dictate, and boast of their wisdom, who are weak and underlings, and whose lot it is to be dictated to. Some think, Pilate here reflects upon the law of Moses, as if that allowed them to do that which the Roman law would by no means allow, the judging of a man unheard: It may be *your law* will suffer such a thing, but ours will not. Thus, through their corruptions, the law of God was blasphemed; and so is his gospel too.

(4.) They disowned any authority as judges, and (since it must be so) are content to be prosecutors: They now grow less insolent, and more submissive, and own, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*, whatever less punishment we may inflict, and this is a *malefactor* whom we would have the blood of.

1. Some think, they had lost their power to give judgment in matters of life and death, only by their own carelessness, and cowardly yielding to the darling iniquities of the age; so Dr. Lightfoot. *ἐκ ἧστὶ, It is not in our power to pass sentence of death upon any*, if we do, we shall have the mob about our ears presently.

2. Others think, their power was taken from them by the Romans, because they had not used it well, or because it was thought too great a trust to be lodged in the hands of a conquered, and yet an unsubdued people. Their acknowledgment of this they designed for a compliment to Pilate, and to atone for their rudeness, *ver. 30.* but it amounts to a full evidence that *the sceptre was departed from Judah*, and therefore now the Messiah was to come, *Gen. xlix. 10.* If the Jews have no power to put any man to death, where is *the sceptre*? Yet they ask not where is *the Shiloh*?

3. However, there was a providence in it, that either they should have no power to put any man to death, or should decline the exercise but upon this occasion, *That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die*, *ver. 32.* Observe,

(1.) In general, that even they who designed the defeating of Christ's sayings, beyond their intention, were made serviceable to the fulfilling of them, by an over-ruling hand of God. *No word of Christ shall fall to the ground*; he can never, either deceive, or be deceived: Even *the chief priests*, while they persecuted him as a *deceiver*, had their spirits so directed, as to help to prove him true, when, we would think, by taking other measures, they might have defeated his predictions: *Howbeit, they mean not so*, *Isa. x. 7.*

(2.) Those sayings of Christ in particular were fulfilled, which he had spoken concerning his own death. Two sayings of Christ concerning his death were fulfilled, by the Jews declining to judge him according to their law. 1. He had said that he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and that they should put him to death, *Matt. xx. 19.* *Mark x. 33.* *Luke xviii. 32.* and hereby that saying was fulfilled. 2. He had said that he should be crucified, *Matt. xx. 19.* — *xxvi. 2.* *lifted up*, *John iii. 14.* — *xii. 32.* Now if they had judged him by their law, he had been stoned; burning, strangling, and beheading, were in some cases used among the Jews, but never crucifying. It was therefore necessary Christ should be put to death by the Romans, that, being *hanged upon a tree*, he might be made a curse for us, *Gal. iii. 13.* and his hands and feet might be pierced: As the Roman power had brought him to be born at Bethlehem, so now to die upon a cross, and both according to the scriptures. It is likewise determined concerning us, though not discovered to us, *what death we shall die*, which should free us from all disquieting cares about that matter; Lord, what, and when, and how thou hast appointed.

Secondly, Here is Pilate's conference with the prisoner, *ver. 35.* &c. where we have,

1. The prisoner set to the bar; Pilate, after he had conferred with the chief priests at his door, entered into the hall, and called for Jesus to be brought in: He would not examine him in the crowd, where he might be disturbed by the noise, but ordered him to be brought into the hall; for he made no difficulty of going in among the Gentiles. We, by sin, were become liable to the judgment of God, and were to be brought before his bar, therefore, Christ being made sin, and a curse for us, was arraigned as a criminal. Pilate entered into judgment with him, that God might not enter into judgment with us.

2. His examination. The other evangelists tell us, that his accusers had laid it to his charge, that he *perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cesar*, and upon this he is examined.

(1.) Here is a question put to him with a design to ensnare him, and to find out something, upon which to ground an accusation: *Art thou the king of the Jews?* *ὁ βασιλεὺς*, that king of the Jews, that has been so much talked of, and so long expected? Messiah, the prince; art thou he? *i. e.* Dost thou pretend to be he? Dost thou call thy self? and wouldst thou be thought so? For he was far from imagining that really he was so, or making a question of that. Some think, Pilate asked this with an air of scorn and contempt: What! *Art thou a king*, that makest so mean a figure? *Art thou the king of the Jews*, by whom thou art thus hated and persecuted? *Art thou king de jure*, while the emperor is only king *de facto*? Since it could not be proved he ever said it, he would constrain him to say it now, that he might proceed upon his own confession.

(2.) Christ answers this question with another, not for evasion, but as an intimation to Pilate, to consider what he did, and upon what grounds he went, *ver. 34. Sayest thou this thing of thy self*, from a suspicion arising in thy own breast, or did others tell it thee of me, and dost thou ask it only to oblige them?

1. It is plain thou hast no reason to say that of thy self. Pilate was obliged by his office to take care of the interests of the Roman government, but he could not say that that was in any danger, or suffered any damage, by any thing our Lord Jesus had ever said or done. He never appeared in worldly pomp, never assumed any secular power, never acted as a judge or divider, never were any traitorous principles or practices objected to him, nor any thing that might give the least umbrage of suspicion.

2. If others tell it thee of me, to incense thee against me, thou oughtest to consider who they are, and upon what principles they go, and whether they who represented him as an enemy to Cesar, were not really such themselves, and therefore used this only as a pretence to cover their malice, which, if so, ought to be well weighed by a judge that would do justice: Nay, if Pilate had been as inquisitive as he ought to have been in this matter, he would have found that the true reason why the chief priests were outrageous against Jesus, was, because he did not set up a temporal kingdom in opposition to the Roman power; if he would have done that, and would have wrought miracles to bring them out of the Roman bondage, as Moses did to bring them out of the Egyptian, they would have been so far from siding with the Romans against him, that they would have made him their king, and have fought under him against the Romans; but he not answering this expectation of theirs, they charged that upon him, which they were themselves most notoriously guilty of, disaffection to, and design against the present government; and was such an information as this fit to be countenanced?

(3.) Pilate resents Christ's answer, and takes it very heinously, *ver. 35.* This is a direct answer to Christ's question, *ver. 34.*

1. Christ had asked him, whether he spoke of himself? No, faith he, *Am I a Jew*, that thou suspectest me to be in the plot against thee? I know nothing of the Messiah, nor desire to know, and therefore interest not my self in the dispute who is the Messiah, and who not, it is all alike to me. Observe with what disdain Pilate asks, *Am I a Jew?* The Jews were, upon many accounts, an honourable people, but, having corrupted the covenant of their God, he made them contemptible and base before all the people, *Mal. ii. 8, 9.* so that a man of sense and honour reckoned it a scandal to be counted a Jew. Thus good names often suffer for the sake of the ill men that wear them. It is sad, that when a Turk is suspected of dishonesty, he should ask, What! do you take me for a Christian?

2. Christ had asked him, whether others told him; yes, faith he, and those *thine own people*, that, one would think, should be biassed in favour of thee, and the priests, whose testimony, in *verbum sacerdotis*, ought to be regarded, and therefore I have nothing to do but to proceed upon their information. Thus Christ, in his religion, still suffers by those that are of his own nation, even the priests, that profess relation to him, but do not live up to their profession.

3. Christ had declined answering that question, *Art thou the king of the Jews?* And therefore Pilate puts another question to him, more general, *What hast thou done?* What provocation hast thou given to thy own nation, and particularly the priests, to be so violent against thee? Surely there cannot be all this smoke but there is some fire, what is it?

(4.) Christ, in his next reply, gives a more full and direct answer to Pilate's former question, *Art thou a king?* explaining in what sense he was a king, but not such a king as was any ways dangerous to the Roman government, not a secular king, for his interest was not supported by secular methods, *ver. 36.* Observe,

1. An account of the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom; it is not of this world; it is expressed negatively what it is not, to rectify the present mistakes concerning it; but the positive is implied, it is the kingdom of heaven, and belongs to another world; he is a king, and has a kingdom, but not of this world.

1. Its rise is not from this world; the kingdoms of men arise out of the sea, and the earth, *Dan. vii. 3.* *Rev. xiii. 1, 11.* but the holy



*holy city comes down from God out of heaven*, Rev. xxi. 2. his kingdom is not by succession, election, or conquest, but by the immediate and special designation of the divine will and counsel. 2. Its nature is not worldly, it is a *kingdom within men*, Luke xvii. 21. set up in their hearts and consciences, Rom. xiv. 17: its riches spiritual, powers spiritual, and *all its glory within*. The ministers of state in Christ's kingdom have not *the spirit of the world*, 1 Cor. ii. 12. 3. Its guards and supports are not worldly, its weapons spiritual; it needed not, nor used, secular force to maintain and advance it, nor was it carried on in a way hurtful to kings or provinces; it did not in the least interfere with the prerogatives of princes, or the property of their subjects; it tended not to alter any national establishment in secular things, nor opposed any kingdom but that of sin and Satan. 4. Its tendency and design is not worldly; Christ aimed not, nor would allow his disciples to aim at, the pomp and power of *the great men of the earth*. 5. Its subjects, though they are in the world, yet are not of the world; they are called and chosen out of the world, are born from, and bound for, another world; they are neither *the world's* pupils, nor its darlings; neither governed by its wisdom, nor enriched with its wealth.

2. An evidence of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom produced: If he had designed an opposition to the government, he would have fought them at their own weapons, and would have repelled force with force of the same nature; but he did not take this course: *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews*, and my kingdom be ruined by them. But, 1. His followers did not offer to fight, there was no uproar, no attempt to rescue him, though the town was now full of Galileans, his friends and countrymen, and they generally armed; but the peaceable behaviour of his disciples on this occasion, was enough to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. 2. He did not order them to fight; nay, he forbade them; which was an evidence, both that he did not depend upon worldly aids, for he could have summoned legions of angels into his service, which shewed that his kingdom was from above, as also that he did not dread worldly opposition, for he was very willing to be delivered to the Jews, as knowing that that which would have been the destruction of any worldly kingdom, would be the advancement and establishment of his; justly therefore doth he conclude, *now you may see my kingdom is not from hence; in the world, but not of it*.

(5.) In answer to Pilate's further query, he replies yet more directly, ver. 37. where we have,

1. Pilate's plain question, *Art thou a king then?* Thou speakest of a kingdom thou hast, *art thou then*, in any sense, a king? And what colour hast thou for such a claim? Explain thy self.

2. The good confession which our Lord Jesus witnessed before Pontius Pilate, in answer to this, 1 Tim. vi. 13. *Thou sayest that I am a king*, i. e. it is as thou sayest, I am a king; for *I came to bear witness of the truth*.

(1.) He grants himself to be a king, though not in the sense that Pilate meant it: The Messiah was expected under the character of a king, Messiah the prince, and therefore having owned to Caiaphas that he was *the Christ*, he would not disown to Pilate that he was a king, lest he should seem inconsistent with himself. Note, Though Christ took upon him the form of a servant, yet even then he justly claimed the honour and authority of a king.

(2.) He explains himself, and shews how he is a king, as he came to bear witness of the truth; he rules in the minds of men by the power of truth. If he had meant himself a temporal prince, he would have said, *For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world*, to rule the nations, to conquer kings, and take possession of kingdoms; no, he came to be a witness, a witness for the God that made the world, and against sin that ruins the world, and by this word of his testimony he sets up, and keeps up his kingdom. It was foretold that he should be a witness to the people, and, as such, a leader and commander to the people, Isa. lv. 4. Christ's kingdom was not of this world, in which truth faileth, Isa. lix. 15. *Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*; but of that world, in which truth reigns eternally: Christ's errand into the world, and his business in the world, was to bear witness to the truth: 1. To reveal it, to discover to the world that which otherwise could not have been known concerning God, and his will, and good will to men, John i. 18. — xvii. ult. 2. To confirm it, Rom. xv. 8. By his miracles he bore witness to the truth of religion, the truth of divine revelation, and of God's perfections and providence, and the truth of his promise and covenant, that all men through him might believe. Now by doing this he is a king, and sets up a kingdom.

1. The foundation and power, the spirit and genius, of Christ's kingdom is truth, divine truth: When he said, *I am the truth*, he said, in effect, *I am a king*: He conquers by the convincing evidence of truth, he rules by the commanding power of truth, and, in his majesty, rides prosperously, because of truth, Psalm xlv. 4. It is with his truth, that he shall judge the people, Psalm xcvi. 13. It is the sceptre of his kingdom; he draws with the cords of a man, i. e. with truth revealed to us, and received by us, in the love of it; and thus he brings thoughts into obedience: He came a light into the world, and rules as the sun by day.

2. The subjects of this kingdom are those that are of the truth. All that, by the grace of God, are rescued from under the power of the father of lies, and are disposed to receive the truth, and submit to the power and influence of it, will hear Christ's voice, i. e. will become his subjects, and will bear faith and true allegiance to him. Every one that has any real sense of true religion, will entertain the Christian religion, and they belong to his kingdom; by the power of truth he makes them willing, Psalm cx. 3. All that are in love with truth, will hear the voice of Christ; for greater, better, surer, sweeter truths, can no where be found, than are found in Christ, by whom grace and truth came; so that by hearing Christ's voice, we know that we are of the truth, 1 John iii. 19.

(6.) Pilate hereupon puts a good question to him, but doth not stay for an answer, ver. 38. He said, *What is truth?* and immediately went out again.

1. It is certain this was a good question, and could not be put to one that was better able to answer it. Truth is that pearl of great price, which the human understanding has a desire to, and is in quest of; for it cannot rest but in that which is, or, at least, is apprehended to be truth. When we search the scriptures, and attend the ministry of the word, it must be with this enquiry, *What is truth?* and with this prayer, *Lead me in thy truth; into all truth*. But many put this question, that have not patience and constancy enough to persevere in their search after truth; or not humility and sincerity enough to receive it when they have found it, 2 Tim. iii. 7. Thus many deal with their own consciences, they ask them those needful questions, *What am I? What have I done?* but will not take time for an answer.

2. It is uncertain with what design Pilate asked this question.

(1.) Perhaps, he spoke it as a learner, as one that began to think well of Christ, and to look upon him with some respect, and desired to be informed what new notions he advanced, and what improvements he pretended to in religion and learning: But while he desired to hear some new truth from him, as Herod, to see some miracle, the clamour and outrage of the priests mob at his gate obliged him abruptly to let fall the discourse.

(2.) Some think, he speaks it as a judge, enquiring further into the cause now brought before him; let me into this mystery, and prithee tell me what the truth of it is, the true state of this matter.

(3.) Others think, he speaks it as a scoffer, in a jeering way. Thou talkest of truth, canst thou tell what truth is? or give me a definition of it? Thus he makes a jest of the everlasting gospel, that great truth, which the chief priests hated and persecuted, and which Christ was now witnessing to, and suffering for; and, like men of no religion, who take a pleasure in bantering all religions, he ridicules both sides; and therefore Christ made him no reply: *Answer not a fool according to his folly; cast not pearls before swine*. But though Christ would not tell Pilate what is truth, he has told his disciples, and, by them, has told us, John xiv. 6.

Thirdly, The result of both these conferences with the prosecutors and the prisoner, ver. 38, 39, 40. in two things:

1. The judge appeared his friend, and favourable to him, for,

(1.) He publicly declared him innocent, ver. 38. upon the whole matter, *I find in him no fault at all*. He supposeth there might be some controversy in religion between him and them, wherein he was as likely to be in the right as they, but nothing criminal appears against him. This solemn declaration of Christ's innocence, was, 1. For the justification and honour of the Lord Jesus: By this it appears, that though he was treated as the worst of malefactors, he had never merited such treatment. 2. For the explaining of the design and intention of his death: That he did not die for any sin of his own, even in the judgment of the judge himself, and therefore he died as a sacrifice for our sins, and that even in the judgment of the prosecutors themselves, that one man should die for the people, John xi. 50. This is he that did no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth, Isa. liii. 9. who was to be cut off, but not for himself, Dan. ix. 26. 3. For the aggravating of the sin of the Jews, that prosecuted him with so much violence: If a prisoner have had a fair trial, and has been acquitted by those that are proper judges of the crime, especially if there be no cause to suspect them partial in his favour, he must be believed innocent; and his accusers are bound to acquiesce. But our Lord Jesus, though brought in not guilty, is still run down as a malefactor; and his blood thirsted for.

(2.) He proposed an expedient for his discharge, ver. 39: *You have a custom that I should release you a prisoner at the passover*, shall it be this king of the Jews? He proposed this, not to the chief priests, he knew they would never agree to it, but to the multitude; it was an appeal to the people, as appears, Matt. xxvii. 15. Probably, he had heard how this Jesus had been attended but the other day with the hosanna's of the common people, he therefore looked upon him to be the darling of the multitude, and the envy only of the rulers, and therefore he made no doubt but they would demand the release of Jesus, and that would stop the mouth of the prosecutors, and all would be well.

1. He allows their custom, for which, perhaps, they had had a long prescription, in honour of the passover, which was a memorial of their release: But it was adding to God's words, as if he had



not instituted enough for the due commemoration of that deliverance, and, though an act of mercy, might be injustice to the publick, *Prov. xvii. 15.*

2. He offers to release Jesus to them according to the custom. If Pilate had had the honesty and courage that became a judge, he should not have named an innocent person to be competitor with a notorious criminal for this favour; if he *found no fault in him*, he was bound in conscience to discharge him: But he was willing to trim the matter, and please all sides; and was governed more by worldly wisdom, than by the rules of equity.

2. The people appeared his enemies, and implacable against him, *ver. 40. They cried all again, and again, Not this man, let not him be released, but Barabbas.* Observe,

(1.) How fierce and outrageous they were: Pilate proposed the thing to them calmly, as worthy their mature consideration, but they resolved it in a heat, and gave in their resolution with clamour and noise, and in the utmost confusion. Note, The enemies of Christ's holy religion cry it down, and so hope to run it down; witness the outcry at Ephesus, *Acts xix. 34.* But those who think the worse of things or persons, merely for their being thus exclaimed against, have a very small share of constancy and consideration: Nay, there is cause to suspect a deficiency of reason and justice on that side, which calls in the assistance of popular tumult.

(2.) How foolish and absurd they were, intimated in the short account here given of the other candidate: *Now Barabbas was a robber*; and therefore, 1. A breaker of the law of God; and yet he shall be spared, rather than one who reproved the pride, avarice, and tyranny of the priests and elders: Though *Barabbas be a robber*, he will not rob them of Moses's seat, nor of their traditions, and then no matter. 2. He is an enemy to the publick safety, and personal property: The clamour of the town uses to be against robbers, *Job xxx. 5. Men cried after them as after a thief*, yet here it is for one: Thus they do who prefer their sins before Christ: Sin is a robber, every lust is a robber, and yet foolishly chosen rather than Christ, who would truly enrich us.

## C H A P. XIX.

Though in the history hitherto this evangelist seems industriously to have declined the recording of such passages as had been related by the other evangelists, yet when he comes to the sufferings and death of Christ, instead of passing them over as one ashamed of his master's chain and cross, and looking upon them as the blemishes of his story, there he repeats what had been before related, with considerable enlargements, as one that desired to know nothing, but Christ, and him crucified; to glory in nothing, save in the cross of Christ. In the story of this chapter we have, 1. The remainder of Christ's trial before Pilate, which was tumultuous and confused, *ver. 1.—15.* 2. Sentence given, and execution done upon it, *ver. 16.—18.* 3. The title over his head, *ver. 19.—22.* 4. The parting of his garment, *ver. 23, 24.* 5. The care he took of his mother, *ver. 25.—27.* 6. The giving him vinegar to drink, *ver. 28, 29.* 7. His dying word, *ver. 30.* 8. The piercing of his side, *ver. 31.—37.* 9. The burial of his body, *ver. 38.—42.* O that in meditating on these things, we may experimentally know the power of Christ's death, and the fellowship of his sufferings!

1. **T**HEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. 2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. 3. And said, Hail king of the Jews: and they smote him with their hands. 4. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man. 6. When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. 7. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. 8. ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 9. And went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 10. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? 11. Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. 12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsars friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speak-

eth against Cæsar. 13. ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king. 15. But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

Here is a further account of the unfair trial which they gave to our Lord Jesus. The prosecutors carrying it on with great confusion among the people, and the judge with great confusion in his own breast, between both, the narrative is such as is not easily reduced to a method; we must therefore take the parts of it as they lie.

First, The judge abuseth the prisoner, though he declares him innocent, and hopes therewith to pacify the prosecutors; wherein his intention, if indeed it were good, will by no means justify his proceedings, which were, probably, unjust.

(1.) He ordered him to be whipt as a criminal, *ver. 1. Pilate, seeing the people so outrageous, and being disappointed in his project of releasing him upon the peoples choice, took Jesus, and scourged him*, i. e. appointed the lictors that attended him to do it. Bede is of opinion, that *Pilate scourged Jesus himself with his own hands*, because it is said, he *took him, and scourged him*, that it might be done favourably. Matthew and Mark mention his scourging after his condemnation, but here it appears to have been before. St. Luke speaks of Pilate's offering to *chastise him, and let him go*; which must be before sentence. This scourging of him was designed only to pacify the Jews, and in it Pilate put a compliment upon them, that he would take their word against his own sentiments so far. The Roman scourgings were ordinarily very severe, not limited, as among the Jews, to *forty stripes*; yet this pain and shame Christ submitted to *for our sakes*:

1. That the scriptures might be fulfilled, which spake of his being stricken, smitten, and afflicted, and the chastisement of our peace being upon him, *Isa. liii. 4.* Of his giving his back to the smiters, *Isa. l. 6.* Of the plowers plowing upon his back, *Psal. cxxix. 3.* He himself likewise had foretold it, *Matt. xx. 19. Mark x. 34. Luke xviii. 32.*

2. That by his stripes we might be healed, *1 Pet. ii. 24.* We deserved to have been chastised with whips and scorpions, and to be beaten with many stripes, having known our Lord's will and not done it, but Christ underwent the stripes for us, bearing the rod of his Father's wrath, *Lam. iii. 1.* Pilate's design in scourging him was, that he might not be condemned, which did not take effect, but intimated what was God's design, that his being scourged might prevent our being condemned, we having fellowship in his sufferings, and that did take effect: The physician scourged, and so the patient healed.

3. That stripes, for his sake, might be sanctified, and made easy to his followers; and they might, as they did, rejoice in that shame, *Acts v. 40.—xvi. 22.* as Paul did, who was in stripes above measure, *2 Cor. xi. 23.* Christ's stripes take out the sting of theirs, and alter the property of them. *We are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world*, *1 Cor. xi. 32.*

(2.) He turned him over to his soldiers to be ridiculed and made sport with as a fool, *ver. 2, 3. The soldiers*, that were the governor's life-guard, put a crown of thorns upon his head; such a crown fittest for such a king; they put on him a purple robe, some old thread-bare coat of that colour, which they thought good enough to be the badge of his royalty; and they complimented him with, *Hail king of the Jews*, like people like king, and then smote him with their hands.

1. See here the baseness and injustice of Pilate, that he would suffer one whom he believed an innocent person, and if so, an excellent person, to be thus abused, and trampled on, by his own servants. They who are under the arrest of the law, ought to be under the protection of it; and their being secured, is to be their security. But Pilate did this, 1. To oblige his soldiers merry humour, and, perhaps, his own too, notwithstanding the gravity one might have expected in a judge: *Herod*, as well as *his men of war*, had just before done the same, *Luke xxiii. 11.* It was as good as a stage-play to them, now it was a festival time; as the Philistines made sport with Sampson. 2. To oblige the Jews malicious humour, and to gratify them, who desired that all possible disgrace might be done to Christ, and the utmost indignities put upon him.

2. See here the rudeness and insolence of the soldiers, how perfectly lost they were to all justice and humanity, who could thus triumph over a man in misery, and one that had been in reputation for wisdom and honour, and never did any thing to forfeit it. But thus hath Christ's holy religion been basely misrepresented, dressed up by ill men at their pleasure, and so exposed to contempt and ridicule, as Christ was here. 1. They clothe him with a mock-robe, as if it were a sham, and a jest, and nothing but the product of a heated fancy, and a crazed imagination. And as Christ is here represented a king in conceit only, so is his religion



as a concern in conceit only, and God and the soul, sin and duty, heaven and hell, are with them all chimera's. 2. They *crown it with thorns*, as if it were a perfect penance, and the greatest pain and hardship in the world; as if to submit to the conduct of God and conscience were to thrust ones head into a thicket of thorns, but this is an unjust imputation; *thorns and snares are in the way of the froward*, but roses and laurels in religion's ways.

3. See here the wonderful condescension of our Lord Jesus in his sufferings for us. Great and generous minds can bear any thing better than ignominy; any toil, any pain, any loss rather than reproach; yet this the great and holy Jesus submitted to for us. See and admire, 1. The *invincible patience of a sufferer*, leaving us an example of contentment and courage, evenness, and easiness of spirit under the greatest hardships we may meet with in the way of duty. 2. The *invincible love and kindness of a Saviour*, who not only cheerfully, and resolutely went through all this, but voluntarily undertook it for us, and for our salvation. Herein he commended his love, that he would not only die for us, but die *as a fool dies*. 1. He *endured the pain*; not the pangs of death only, though in the death of the cross those were most exquisite; but as if those were too little, he submitted to those previous pains. Shall we complain of a *thorn in the flesh*, and of being *buffeted* by affliction, because we need it, to hide pride from us, when Christ *humbled himself* to bear those *thorns in the head*, and those *buffetings* to save and teach us? 2 Cor. xii. 7. 2. He *despised the shame*, the shame of a fool's coat, and the mock respects paid him with *Hail king of the Jews*. If we be at any time ridiculed for well-doing, let us not be ashamed, but glorify God, for thus we are partakers of Christ's sufferings. He that bore these *sham honours*, was recompensed with *real honours*, and so shall we, if we patiently *suffer shame* for him.

Secondly, Pilate having thus abused the prisoner, presents him to the prosecutors, in hopes they would now be satisfied and drop the prosecution, *ver. 4, 5*. Here he proposeth two things to their consideration,

1. That he had not found any thing in him which made him obnoxious to the Roman government, *ver. 4*. *I find no fault in him: ἰδοὺ τὸν ἀνὴρ οὗτος. I do not find in him the least fault, or cause of accusation*: Upon further enquiry he repeats the declaration he had made, *chap. xviii. 38*. Hereby he *condemns himself*; if he *found no fault in him*, why did he scourge him? Why did he suffer him to be abused? None ought to *suffer ill* but those that *do ill*; yet thus many banter and abuse religion, who yet if they be serious, cannot but own they *find no fault in it*. If he *found no fault in him*, why did he bring him out to his prosecutors, and not immediately release him, as he ought to do? If Pilate would have consulted his own conscience only, he had neither *scourged* Christ, nor *crucified* him, but thinking to trim the matter, to please the people by *scourging* Christ, and save his conscience by *not crucifying* him, behold, he doth both; whereas, if he had at first resolved to *crucify* him, he needed not have *scourged* him. It is common for those, who think to keep themselves from greater sins, by venturing upon lesser sins, to run into both.

2. That he had done that to him which would make him the less dangerous to them and to their government, *ver. 5*. He brought him out to them *wearing the crown of thorns*, his head and face all bloody, and said, *behold the man* whom you are so jealous of, intimating, that though his having been so popular might have given them some cause to fear that his interest in the country would lessen *theirs*, yet that he had taken an effectual course to prevent it, by treating him as a slave, and exposing him to contempt, after which he supposed the people would never look upon him with any respect, nor could he ever retrieve his reputation again. Little did Pilate think with what veneration even these sufferings of Christ would in after ages be commemorated by the best and greatest of men, who would glory in *that cross*, and *those stripes* which he thought would have been to him and his followers a perpetual and indelible reproach.

1. Observe here how our Lord Jesus *shews himself* dressed up in all the marks of ignominy. He *came forth* willing to be made a spectacle, and to be *hooted at*, as no doubt he was, when he *came forth* in this garb, knowing that he was set for *a sign that should be spoken against*, Luke ii. 34. Did he go forth thus bearing our reproach, let us go forth to him *bearing his reproach*, Heb. xiii. 13.

2. How Pilate shews him, *Pilate saith unto them, behold the man*. He *saith unto them*, so the original is; and the immediate antecedent being Jesus, I see no inconvenience in supposing these to be Christ's own words; he said, *behold the man* you are so exasperated against: But some of the Greek copies, and the generality of the translators supply it as we do, *Pilate saith unto them*, with a design to qualify them, *behold the man*; not so much to move their pity, *behold a man* worthy your compassion, as to silence their jealousy, *behold a man* not worthy your suspicion; a man from whom you can henceforth fear no danger; his crown is *profaned* and *cast to the ground*, and now all mankind will make a jest of him.

The word however is very affecting, *behold the man*. It is good for every one of us, with an eye of faith, to behold the man Christ Jesus in his sufferings. *Behold this King with the crown wherewith*

*his mother crowned him*; the crown of thorns, *Cant. iii. 11*. *Behold him*, and be suitably affected with the sight. *Behold him*, and mourn because of him; *behold him* and love him; *be still looking unto Jesus*.

Thirdly, The prosecutors instead of being pacified, were but the more exasperated, *ver. 6, 7*.

1. Observe here their clamour and outrage. The *chief priests* who headed the mob, *cried out* with fury and indignation, and *their officers*, or servants, who must say as they said, joined with them in crying, *crucify him, crucify him*. The common people, perhaps would have acquiesced in Pilate's declaration of his innocence, but their leaders, the priests, *caused them to err*. Now by this it appears that their malice against Christ was, 1. *Unreasonable and most absurd*, in that they offer not to make good their charge against him, or to object against the judgment of Pilate concerning him; but though he be innocent he must be crucified. 2. It was insatiable and very cruel. Neither the extremity of his scourging, nor his patience under it, nor the tender expostulations of the judge, could mollify them in the least; no, nor could the jest into which Pilate had turned the cause put them into a pleasant humour. 3. It was *violent* and *exceeding resolute*; they will have it their own way, and hazard the governor's favour, the peace of the city, and their own safety, rather than abate of the utmost of their demands. Were they so violent in running down our Lord Jesus, and in crying, *crucify him, crucify him*? And shall not we be vigorous and zealous in advancing his name, and in crying, *crown him, crown him*? Did their hatred of him sharpen their endeavours against him? and shall not our love to him quicken our endeavours for him and his kingdom?

2. The check Pilate gave to their fury, still insisting upon the prisoner's innocence. *Take ye him, and crucify him*, if he must be crucified; this is spoken ironically, he knew they could not, they durst not crucify him; but it is as if he should say, you shall not make me a drudge to your malice; I cannot with a safe conscience crucify him. A good resolve, if he could but have stuck to it. He *found no fault in him*, and therefore should not have continued to parley with the prosecutors: They that would be *safe from sin* should be *deaf to temptation*. Nay, he should have secured the prisoner from their insults: What was he armed with power for, but to protect the injured? The guards of governors ought to be the guards of justice. But Pilate had not courage enough to stick to his conscience; and his cowardise betrayed him into a snare.

3. The further colour which the prosecutors gave to their demand, *ver. 7*. *We have a law, and by our law*, if it were but in our power to execute it, *he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God*. Now here observe,

1. They *make their boast of the law*, even then, when *through breaking the law they dishonoured God*, as is charged upon the Jews, *Rom. ii. 23*. They had indeed an excellent law, far exceeding the statutes and judgments of other nations; but in vain did they boast of their law, when they abused it to such ill purposes.

2. They discover a restless and inveterate malice against our Lord Jesus. When they could not incense Pilate against him by alledging that he pretended himself a King, they urge this, that he pretended himself a God. Thus they turn every stone to take him off.

3. They *pervert the law*, and make that the instrument of their malice. Some think they refer to a late law made particularly against Christ, as if being a law it must be executed right or wrong; whereas there is a wo to them that *decree the unrighteous decrees*, and that *write the grievousness which they have prescribed*, *Isa. x. 1*. See *Mic. vi. 16*. But it should rather seem they refer to the law of Moses, and if so, 1. It was true that blasphemers, idolaters and false prophets, were to be put to death by that law: Whoever falsely pretended to be the Son of God was guilty of blasphemy, *Lev. xxiv. 16*. But then, 2. It was false that he pretended to be the Son of God, for he really was so; and they ought to have enquired into the proofs he produced of his being so. If he said he was *the Son of God*, and the scope and tendency of his doctrine was not to draw people from God, but to bring them to him, and he confirm his mission and doctrine by miracles, as undoubtedly he did beyond contradiction, by their law they ought to *hearken to him*, *Deut. xviii. 18, 19*. and if they did not, they were to be *cut off*. That which was his honour, and might have been their happiness, if they had not stood in their own light, they impute to him as a crime for which he *ought to die*; yet if he ought to *die* by their law, he ought not to be crucified, for that was no death inflicted by their law.

Fourthly, The judge brings the prisoner again to his trial upon this new suggestion. Observe,

1. The concern Pilate was in when he heard this alledged, *ver. 8*. When he heard that his prisoner pretended not to royalty only, but to deity, he was *the more afraid*: This embarrassed him more than ever, and made the case more difficult both ways; for, 1. There was the more danger of offending the people if he should acquit him, for he knew how jealous that people were for the unity of the Godhead, and what aversion they now had to other gods; and



and therefore, though he might hope to pacify their rage against a *pretended King*, he could never reconcile them to a *pretended God*: If this be at the bottom of the tumult, thinks Pilate, it will not be turned off with a jest. 2. There was the more danger of offending his own conscience if he should *condemn* him. Is he one (thinks Pilate) that makes himself *the Son of God*, and what if it should prove that he is so? What will become of me then? Even natural conscience makes men afraid of being found *fighting against God*. The heathen had some fabulous traditions of incarnate deities appearing sometimes in mean circumstances, and treated ill by some that paid dear for their so doing. Pilate fears, lest he should thus run himself into a premunire.

2. His further examination of our Lord Jesus thereupon, *ver. 9.* That he might give the prosecutors all the fair play they could desire, he resumed the debate, went into the judgment-hall, and asked Christ, *whence art thou?* Observe,

1. The place he chose for this examination, he *went into the judgment-hall*, for privacy, that he might be out of the noise and clamour of the crowd, and might examine the thing the more closely. They that would find out the truth as it is in Jesus, must get out of the noise of prejudice, and retire as it were into the judgment-hall, to converse with Christ alone.

2. The question he put to him, *whence art thou?* Art thou *from men* or *from heaven?* *From beneath* or *from above?* He had before asked directly, *art thou a King?* But doth here directly ask, *art thou the Son of God?* Lest he should seem to meddle with divine things too boldly. But in general, *whence art thou?* Where wast thou? And in what world hadst thou a being before thy coming into this world?

3. The silence of our Lord Jesus when he was examined upon this head, but *Jesus gave him no answer.* This was not a sullen silence in contempt of the court, nor was it because he knew not what to say. But,

1. It was a patient silence, that the scripture might be fulfilled, *as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*, Isa. liii. 7. This silence loudly spake his submission to his Father's will in his present sufferings, which he thus accommodated himself to, and composed himself to bear. He was silent because he would say nothing to hinder his sufferings. If Christ had avowed himself a God, as plainly as he avowed himself a King, it is likely he would not have *condemned him*, for he *was afraid*, at the mention of it by the prosecutors; and the Romans, though they triumphed over the *kings of the nations* they conquered, yet stood in awe of their gods. See 1. Cor. ii. 8. *If they had known him to be the Lord of glory they would not have crucified him*, and how then must we have been saved?

2. It was a prudent silence. When the chief priests asked him, *art thou the Son of the Blessed?* He answered, *I am*, for he knew they went upon the scriptures of the Old Testament which spake of the Messiah; but when Pilate asked him, he knew he did not understand his own question, having no notion of the Messiah, and of his being the *Son of God*, and therefore to what purpose should he reply to him whose head was filled with the pagan theology, to which he would have turned his answer?

4. The haughty check which Pilate gave him for his silence, *ver. 10.* *Speakest thou not unto me?* Dost thou put such an affront upon me as to *stand mute?* What, *knowest thou not*, that as president of the province, *I have power*, if I think fit, to *crucify thee*; and have *power*, if I think fit, to *release thee*. Observe here,

1. How Pilate magnifies himself, and boasts of his own authority, as not inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said, *that whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive*, Dan. v. 19. Men in power are apt to be puffed up with their power, and the more absolute and arbitrary it is, the more it gratifies their pride, and humours that. But he magnifies his power to an exorbitant degree, when he boasts that he had power to crucify one whom he had declared innocent, for no prince or potentate has authority to do wrong. *Id possumus, quod jure possumus.*

2. How he tramples upon our blessed Saviour, *Speakest thou not unto me?* He reflects upon him, 1. As if he were undutiful and disrespectful to those in authority, not speaking when he was spoken to. 2. As if he were ungrateful to one that had been tender of him; *speakest thou not to me* who have laboured thy release? 3. As if he were *unwise* for himself; wilt thou not speak to clear thy self to one that is willing to clear thee? If Christ had indeed sought to save his life, now had been his time to have spoken; but that which he had to do was to lay down his life.

5. Christ's pertinent answer to this check, *ver. 11.* where,

1. He boldly rebukes his arrogance, and rectifies his mistake. As big as thou lookest and talkest, *thou couldst have no power at all against me*; no power to scourge, no power to crucify, *except it were given thee from above*. Though Christ did not think fit to answer him when he was *impertinent*, then *answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like him*; yet he did think fit to answer him when he was *imperious*, then *answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit*, Prov. xxvi. 4, 5. When Pilate used his power, Christ silently submitted to it; but when he grew proud of it, he made him know himself. All the power

thou hast is given thee from above; which may be taken two ways.

1. As minding him, that his power in general, as a magistrate, was a limited power, and he could do no more than God would suffer him to do. God is the fountain of power; and the *powers that be*, as they are ordained by him, and derived from him, so they are subject to him: They ought to go no further than his law directs them; they can go no further than his providence permits them. They are *God's hand*, and his *sword*, Psal. xvii. 13. Though *the ax may boast it self against him that heweth therewith*, yet still it is but a tool, Isa. x. 5, 15. Let the proud oppressors know, that there is *a higher than they*, to whom they are accountable, Eccl. v. 8. And let this silence the murmurings of the oppressed, *It is the Lord*. God has bid Shimei curse David; and let it comfort them, that their persecutors can do no more than God will let them. See Isa. li. 12, 13.

2. As informing him that his power against him in particular, and all the efforts of that power, were *by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God*, Acts ii. 23. Pilate never fancied himself to look so great as now, when he sat in judgment upon such a prisoner as this, who was looked upon by many as the *Son of God* and King of Israel; and had the fate of *so great a man* at his dispose; but Christ lets him know that he was herein but an instrument in God's hand, and could do nothing against him, but by the appointment of heaven, Acts iv. 27, 28.

2. He mildly excuseth and extenuateth his sin, in comparison with the sin of the ring-leaders. *Therefore he that delivered me unto thee*, lies under greater guilt; for thou as a magistrate hast *power from above*, and art in thy place, thy sin is less than theirs, who, from envy and malice, urge thee to abuse thy power.

1. It is plainly intimated, that what Pilate did was sin, a great sin, and the force which the Jews put upon him, and which he put upon himself in it, would not justify him. Christ hereby intended a hint for the awakening of his conscience, and the increase of that fear he was now under. Others guilt will not acquit us, nor will it avail in the great day to say, others were *worse than we*, for we are not to be judged by comparison, but must *bear our own burthen*.

2. Yet theirs that delivered him up to Pilate was the greater sin; by this it appears that all sins are not equal, but some more heinous than others; some comparatively as gnats, others as camels; some as motes in the eyes, others as beams; some as pence, others as pounds. *He that delivered Christ to Pilate* was either,

1. The people of the Jews, who cried out, *crucify him, crucify him*; they had seen Christ's miracles, which Pilate had not; to them the Messiah was first sent, they were his own, and to them who were now enslaved, a Redeemer should have been most welcome, and therefore it was much worse in them to appear against him, than in Pilate.

2. Or rather he means Caiaphas in particular, who was at the head of the conspiracy against Christ, and first advised his death, chap. xi. 49. The sin of Caiaphas was abundantly greater than the sin of Pilate. Caiaphas prosecuted Christ from pure enmity to him and his doctrine, deliberately, and of malice prepense; Pilate condemned him purely for fear of the people, and it was a hasty resolution which he had not time to cool upon.

3. Some think Christ means Judas, for though he did not immediately deliver him into the hands of Pilate, yet he betrayed him to those that did. The sin of Judas was, upon many accounts, greater than the sin of Pilate. Pilate was a stranger to Christ, Judas was his friend and follower. Pilate found no fault in him, but Judas knew a deal of good by him. Pilate though biassed was not bribed, but Judas took a *reward against the innocent*; the sin of Judas was a leading sin, and let in all that followed. He was a *guide to them that took Jesus*. So great was the sin of Judas, that *vengeance suffered him not to live*; but when Christ said this, or soon after, he was *gone to his own place*.

Fifthly, Pilate struggles with the Jews to deliver Jesus out of their hands, but in vain. We hear no more after this of any thing that passed between Pilate and the prisoner, what remains lay between him and the prosecutors.

1. Pilate seems more zealous than before to get Jesus discharged, *ver. 12.* *from thenceforth*, from this time, and for this reason, because Christ had given him that answer, *ver. 11.* which though it had a rebuke in it, yet he took it kindly; and though Christ found fault with him, he still continued to find no fault in Christ, but *sought to release him*, desired it, endeavoured it: *he sought to release him*, he contrived how to do it handsomely and safely, and so as not to disoblige the priests. It never doth well, when our resolutions to do our duty are swallowed up in projects how to do it plausibly and conveniently. If Pilate's policy had not prevailed above his justice, he would not have been long seeking to release him, but would have done it; *fiat justitia ruat cælum*.

2. The Jews were more *furious than ever*, and more violent to get Jesus crucified. Still they carry on their design with noise and clamour as before; so now they *cried out*. They would have it thought



thought that the commonalty was against him, and therefore laboured to get him cried down by a multitude, and it is no hard matter to pack a mob; whereas if a fair poll had been granted, I doubt not but it would have been carried by a great majority for the releasing him. A few mad men may out-shout many wise men, and then fancy themselves to speak the sense (when it is but the nonsense) of a nation, or of all mankind; but it is not so easy a thing to *change the sense* of the people, as it is to misrepresent it, and to change their cry. Now Christ was in the hands of his enemies, his friends were shy, and silent, and disappeared, and those that were against him were forward to shew themselves so, and this gave the chief priests an opportunity to represent it as the concurring vote of all the Jews, that he should be crucified. In this outcry they endeavour two things,

1. To blacken the prisoner as an enemy to Cesar. He had refused the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, had declared his kingdom not to be of this world, and yet they will have it that he *speaks against Cesar*, ἀντιλέγει, he *opposeth Cesar*, invades his dignity and sovereignty. It has always been the artifice of the enemies of religion, to represent it as hurtful to kings and provinces, when it would be highly beneficial to both.

2. To frighten the judge, as no friend to Cesar, if he *let this man go* unpunished, and let him go on, *Thou art not Cesar's friend*, and therefore false to thy trust, and the duty of thy place, and obnoxious to the emperor's displeasure, and liable to be turned out. They intimate a threatening, that they would inform against him, and get him displaced; and here they touched him in a sensible and very tender part. But of all people those Jews should not have pretended a concern for Cesar, who were themselves so ill affected to him and his government. They should not talk of being friends to Cesar, who were themselves such back friends to him; yet thus a pretended zeal for that which is good, often serves to cover a real malice against that which is better.

3. When other expedients had been tried in vain, Pilate slightly endeavoured to banter them out of their fury, and yet in doing that betrayed himself to them, and yielded to the rapid stream, *ver. 13, 14, 15*. After he had stood it out a great while, and seemed now as if he would have made a vigorous resistance upon that attack, *ver. 12*. he safely surrendered. Observe here,

1. What it was that shocked Pilate, *ver. 13*. *When he heard that saying*, that he could not be true to Cesar's honour, nor sure of Cesar's favour, if he did not put Jesus to death, then he thought it was time to look about him. All they had said to prove Christ a malefactor, and that therefore it was Pilate's duty to condemn him, did not move him, but he still kept to his conviction of Christ's innocency; but when they urged that it was his interest to condemn him, then he began to yield. Note, They that bind up their happiness in the favour of men, make themselves an easy prey to the temptations of Satan.

2. What preparation was made for a definitive sentence upon this matter. *Pilate brought Jesus forth*, and he himself in great state took the chair; we may suppose that he called for his robes, that he might look big, and then he *sat down in the judgment-seat*. He was condemned with all the ceremony that could be, 1. To bring us off at God's bar, and that all believers through Christ being judged here, might be acquitted in the court of heaven. 2. To take off the terror of pompous trials, which his followers would be brought to for his sake. Paul might the better stand at Cesar's judgment-seat, when his Master had stood there before him.

Notice is here taken of the place and time.

1. The place where Christ was condemned; in a place called *the Pavement*, but in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*, probably the place where he used to sit try causes or criminals. Some make *Gabbatha* to signify an *enclosed place*, fenced against the insults of the people, whom therefore he did the less need to fear; others an elevated place, raised that all might see him.

2. The time, *ver. 14*. It was the *preparation of the passover*, and about the *sixth hour*. Observe,

1. The day; it was the preparation of the passover *i. e.* for the passover sabbath, and the solemnities of that, and the rest of the days of the feast of unleavened bread. This is plain from *Luke xxiii. 54*. *It was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on*. So that this preparation was for the sabbath. Note, Before the passover there ought to be preparation. This is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin in persecuting Christ with so much malice and fury; that it was when they should have been purging out the old leaven, to get ready for the passover, but, the better the day, the worse the deed.

2. The hour; it was about the *sixth hour*. Some ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts read it about the *third hour*, which agrees with *Mark xv. 25*. And it appears by *Mat. xxvii. 45*. that he was upon the cross before the sixth hour. But it should seem to come in here not as a precise determination of the time, but as an additional aggravation of the sin of his prosecutors, that they were pushing on the prosecution not only on a solemn day, the day of the preparation, but from the third to the sixth hour,

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which was, as we call it, church-time, on that day they were employed in this wickedness, so that for this day, though they were priests, they dropt the temple-service, for they did not leave Christ till the sixth hour, when the darkness began, which frightened them away. Some think that the sixth hour, with this evangelist, is, according to the Roman reckoning and ours, *six of the clock* in the morning, answering to the Jews first hour of the day; this is very probable, that Christ's trial before Pilate was at the height about six in the morning, which was then a little after sun-rising.

3. The rencounter Pilate had with the Jews, both priests and people, before he proceeded to give judgment, endeavouring in vain to stem the tide of their rage.

1. He saith unto the Jews, *behold your king*. This is a reproof to them for the absurdity and malice of their innuendo, that this Jesus made himself a king; *behold your king*, *i. e.* him whom you accuse as a pretender to the crown. Is this a man likely to be dangerous to the government? I am satisfied he is not, and you may be so too, and let him alone. Some think he hereby upbraids them with their secret disaffection to Cesar; you would have this man to be your king, if he would but have headed a rebellion against Cesar. But Pilate, though he was far from meaning so, seems as if he were the voice of God to them. Christ now crowned with thorns here, is as a king at his coronation, offered to the people, *behold your king*, the king which God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion, but they, instead of entering into it with acclamations of joyful consent, protest against him, they will not have a king of God's chusing.

2. They cried out with the greatest indignation, *away with him, away with him*, which speaks disdain as well as malice, *ἀεὶν, ἀεὶν, take him*, he is none of ours; we disown him for our kinsman, much more for our king; we have not only no veneration for him, but no compassion; *away with him* out of our sight; for so it was written of him, he is one whom the nation abhors, *Isa. xlix. 7*. and they hid as it were their faces from him, *Isa. liii. 2, 3*. *Away with him from the earth*, *Acts xxii. 22*. This shews, 1. How we deserved to have been treated at God's tribunal, we were by sin become odious to God's holiness, which cried, *away with them, away with them*, for God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; we were also become obnoxious to God's justice, which cried against us, *crucify them, crucify them*, let the sentence of the law be executed. Had not Christ interposed, and been thus *rejected of man*, we had been for ever *rejected of God*. 2. It shews how we ought to treat our sins; we are often in scripture said to crucify sin, in conformity to Christ's death; now they that crucified Christ, did it with detestation. With a pious indignation we should *run down sin in us*, as they with an impious indignation run him down who was *made sin for us*. The true penitent casts away from him his transgressions, *away with them, away with them*, *Isa. ii. 20.—xxx. 22*. *crucify them, crucify them*; it is not fit they should live in my soul, *Hos. xiv. 8*.

3. Pilate willing to have Jesus released, and yet that it should be their doing, asks them, *Shall I crucify your king?* In saying this, he designed either, 1. To stop their mouths, by shewing them how absurd it was for them to reject one who offered himself to them to be their king, at a time when they needed one more than ever. Have they no sense of slavery? No desire of liberty? No value for a deliverer? Though he saw no cause to fear him, they might see cause to hope for something from him; since crushed and sinking interests are ready to catch at any thing. Or, 2. To stop the mouth of his own conscience; if this Jesus be a king (thinks Pilate) he is only king of the Jews, and therefore I have nothing to do but to make a fair tender of him to them; if they refuse him, and will have their king crucified, what is that to me? He banters them for their folly, in expecting a Messiah, and yet running down one that bid so fair to be he.

4. The chief priests that they might effectually renounce Christ, and engage Pilate to crucify him, but otherwise fore against their will, cried out, *we have no king but Cesar*. This they knew would please Pilate, and so they hoped to carry their point, though at the same time they hated Cesar and his government. But observe here, 1. What a plain indication this is, that the time for the Messiah to appear, even the set time was now come; for if the Jews have no king but Cesar, then is the sceptre departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet, which should never be till Shiloh come to set up a spiritual kingdom. And, 2. What a righteous thing it was with God to bring upon them that ruin by the Romans, which followed not long after. 1. They adhere to Cesar, and to Cesar they shall go. God soon gave them enough of their Cesars, and according to Jotham's parable, since the trees chuse the bramble for their king, rather than the vine and the olive, an evil spirit is sent between them, for they could not do it truly and sincerely, *Jud. ix. 12, 19*. from hence forward they were rebels to the Cesars, and the Cesars tyrants to them, and it ended in the overthrow of their place and nation. It is just with God to make that a scourge and plague to us, which we prefer before Christ. 2. They would have no other king but Cesar, and never have they had any other to this day, but have now abode many days without a king, and without a prince, *Hos. iii. 4*. without any of their own, but the kings of the nations have ruled over them; since they will



have no king but Cefar, fo fhall their doom be, themfelves have decided it.

16. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jefus and led him away. 17. And he bearing his crofs, went forth into a place called *the place* of a fcutl, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha: 18. Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either fide one, and Jefus in the midft.

We have here fentence of death paffed upon our Lord Jefus, and execution done prefently. A mighty ftuggle Pilate had had within him between his convictions and his corruptions, but at length his convictions yielded; and his corruptions prevailed; the fear of man having a greater power over him than the fear of God.

First, *Pilate gave judgment againft Chrift*, and figned the warrant for his execution, *ver. 16.* We may fee here,

1. How Pilate finned againft his confcience; he had again and again pronounced him innocent, and yet at laft condemned him as guilty. Pilate, fince he came to be governor, had in many inftances difobliged and exasperated the Jewifh nation, for he was a man of a haughty, implacable fpirit, and extremely wedded to his humour. He had feized upon the Corban, and fpent it upon a water-work; he had brought in fhields ftamped with Cefar's image, which was very provoking to the Jews; he had facrificed the lives of many to his refolutions herein; fearing therefore he fhould be complained of for thofe and other infolencies, he was willing to gratify the Jews. Now this makes the matter much worfe. If he had been of an eafy, foft and pliable difpofition, his yielding to fo ftrong a ftream, had been the more excufable; but for a man that was fo wilful in other things, and of fo fierce a refolution, to be overcome in a thing of this nature, fhews him an ill man indeed, that could better bear the wronging of his confcience, than the croffing of his humour.

2. How he endeavoured to transfer the guilt upon the Jews. He *delivered him* not to his own officers (as ufual) but to the prosecutors, the chief priefts and elders, fo excufing the wrong to his own confcience with this, that it was but a permissive condemnation, and that he did not put Chrift to death, but only connive at thofe that did it.

3. How Chrift was made *fin for us*. We deferved to have been condemned, but Chrift was condemned for us, that to us there might be *no condemnation*. God was now entering into judgment with his Son, that he might not enter into judgment with his fervants.

Secondly, Judgment was no fooner given, but with all poffible expedition, the prosecutors, having gained their point, refolved to lofe no time, 1. Left Pilate fhould change his mind, and order a reprieve; thofe are enemies to our fouls, the worft of enemies, that hurry us to fin, and then leave us no room to undo what we have done amifs. 2. Left there fhould be *an uproar among the people*; and there fhould have been a greater number againft, than they had with fo much artifice got to be for them.

It were well if we would be thus expeditious in that which is good, and not ftay for more difficulties.

1. They immediately hurried away the prifoner. The *chief priefts* greedily flew upon the prey which they had been long waiting for, now it is drawn into their net. Or *they*, i. e. the foldiers who were to attend the execution, they took him and led him away, not to the place from whence he came, and thence to the place of execution, as is ufual with us, but directly to the place of execution. Both the priefts and the foldiers joined in *leading him away*. Now was the *Son of man delivered into the hands of men*, wicked and unreafonable men. By the law of Mofes (and in appeals by our law) the prosecutors were to be the executioners, *Deut. xvii. 7.* And the priefts here were proud of the office. His being *led away* doth not fuppofe him to have made any oppofition, but *the fcripture muft be fulfilled*, he was *led as a fheep to the flaughter*, *Acts viii. 32.* we deferved to have been *led forth with the workers of iniquity* as criminals to execution, *Pfal. cxxv. 5.* But he was *led forth* for us that we might efcape.

2. To add to his mifery, they obliged him as long he was able to carry his crofs, *ver. 17.* according to the cuftom among the Romans; hence *Fucifer* was among them a name of reproach. Their croffes did not ftand up constantly, as our gibbets do in the places of execution; becaufe the malefactor was nailed to the crofs as it lay along upon the ground, and then it was lifted up and faftened in the earth, and removed when the execution was over, and commonly buried with the body; fo that every one that was crucified had a *crofs of his own*. Now Chrift's carrying his crofs may be confidered, 1. As a part of his fufferings, he endured the crofs literally. It was a long and thick piece of timber, that was neceffary for fuch a ufe, and fome think it was neither feafoned nor hewn. The bleffed body of the Lord Jefus was tender, and unaccuftomed to fuch burthens; it had now lately been harraffed and tired out. His fhoulders fore with the ftripes they had given him; every jog of the crofs would renew his fmart, and be apt to ftrike the thorns he was crowned with into his head; yet all this

he patiently underwent, and it was but the *beginning of sorrow*, 2. As answering the type which went before him; Ifaac, when he was to be offered, carried the wood on which he was to be bound, and with which he was to be burned. 3. As very fignificant of his undertaking, the Father having *laid upon him the iniquity of us all*, *Ifa. liii. 6.* and he being to *take away fin*, by *bearing it in his own body upon the tree*, *1 Pet. ii. 24.* He had faid, in effect, *on me be the curfe*, for he was made a curfe for us, and therefore on him was the crofs. 4. As very inftructive to us. Our Mafter hereby taught all his difciples to take up their crofs and follow him. Whatever crofs he calls us out to bear at any time, we muft remember he bore the crofs firft, and by bearing it *for us*, bears it *off from us* in a great meafure, for thus he hath made *his yoke eafy, and his burthen light*. He bore that end of the crofs that had the curfe upon it, that was the heavy end, and thence all that are his, are enabled to call their afflictions for him light, and but for a moment.

3. They brought him to the place of execution; he *went forth*, not dragged againft his will, but voluntary in his fufferings. He *went forth* out of the city, for he was *crucified without the gate*, *Heb. xiii. 12.* And to put the greater infamy upon his fufferings, he was brought to the common place of execution, as one in all points *numbered among the transgressors*; a place called *Golgotha*, the *place of a skull*, where they threw dead mens skulls and bones, or where the heads of beheaded malefactors were left; a place *ceremonially unclean*, there Chrift fuffered, becaufe he was *made fin for us*, that he might *purge our confciences from dead works*, and the pollution of them. If one would take notice of the traditions of the elders, there are two which are mentioned by many of the antient writers concerning this place. 1. That Adam was buried here, and that this was the place of *his skull*, and they obferve that there where death triumphed over the firft Adam, there the fecond Adam triumphed over him. Gerhard quotes for this tradition, Origen, Cyprian, Epiphanius, Auftin, Jerom and others. 2. That this was that mountain in the land of Moriah, on which Abraham offered up Ifaac, and the ram was a ranfom for Ifaac.

4. There they crucified him, and the other malefactors with him; *ver. 18.* *There they crucified him*. Obferve, 1. What death Chrift died; the death of the crofs, a bloody, painful, shameful death, a curfed death. He was *nailed* to the crofs, as a facrifice bound to the altar, as a Saviour fixt for his undertaking; his ear nailed to God's door-post to ferve him for ever. He was lifted up as the brazen ferpent hung between heaven and earth, becaufe we were unworthy of either, and abandoned by both. His hands ftretched out to invite and embrace us; he hung upon the tree fome hours dying gradually in the full ufe of reafon and fpeech, that he might actually refign himfelf a facrifice. 2. In what company he died; *two other with him*. Probably thofe had not been executed at that time, but at the request of the chief priefts to add to the difgrace of our Lord Jefus; which might be the reafon why one of them reviled him, becaufe their death was haftened for his fake. Had they taken two of his difciples, and crucified them with him, it had been an honour to him; but if fuch as they had been *partakers with him* in fuffering, it would have looked as if they had been *undertakers with him in fatisfaction*: Therefore it was ordered that his fellow-fufferers fhould be the worft of finners, that he might *bear our reproach*, and that the merit might appear to be his only. This expofed him much to be the peoples contempt and hatred, who are apt to judge of perfons by the lump, and are not curious in diftinguifhing, and would conclude him not only a malefactor becaufe he was yoked with malefactors, but the worft of the three, becaufe put in the midft. But thus the fcripture was fulfilled, *he was numbered among the transgressors*. He did not die at the altar among the facrifices, nor mingle his blood with that of bulls and goats; but he died among the criminals, and mingled his blood with theirs who were facrificed to publick juftice.

And now let us pauze a while, and with an eye of faith look upon Jefus; Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? See him who was clothed with glory ftript of it all, and clothed with fhame; him who was the *praise of angels*, made a *reproach of men*; who had been with eternal delight and joy in the bofom of his Father, now in the extremities of pain and agony. See him bleeding, fee him ftuggling, fee him dying, fee him and love him, love him and live to him, and ftudy what we fhall render.

19. ¶ And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the crofs. And the writting was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jefus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. 21. Then faid the chief priefts of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews; but that he faid, I am king of the Jews. 22. Pilate answered, what I have written, I have written. 23. ¶ Then the foldiers, when they had crucified Jefus, took his garments (and made four parts, to every foldier a part) and alfo *his coat*: now the coat was without feam, woven from the top through-

out.



out. 24. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rent it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be : that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. 25. ¶ Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. 27. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home. 28. ¶ After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. 29. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar : and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. 30. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished : and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Here are some remarkable circumstances of Christ's dying, more fully related than before, which they will take special notice of who covet to know Christ, and him crucified.

First, The title set up over his head. Observe,

1. The inscription it self which Pilate wrote, and ordered to be fixed to the top of the cross, declaring the cause for which he was crucified, ver. 19. Matthew called it, *ἀἰτία*, the accusation ; Mark and Luke called it, *ἡ ἐπιγραφὴ*, the inscription ; John calls it by the proper Latin name, *τίτλος*, the title : And it was this, *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*. Pilate intended this for his reproach, that he being *Jesus of Nazareth* should pretend to be king of the Jews, and set up in competition with Cesar, to whom Pilate would thus recommend himself, as very jealous for his honour and interest, when he would treat but a titular king, a king in metaphor, as the worst of malefactors ; but God over-ruled this matter, 1. That it might be a further testimony to the innocency of our Lord Jesus ; for here was an accusation, which, as it was worded, contained no crime. If this be that, if this be all they have to lay to his charge, surely he has done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 2. That it might shew forth his dignity and honour. This is Jesus a Saviour, *Ναζαρεῖτης*, the blessed Nazarite, sanctified to God ; this is the *King of the Jews*, *Messiah the prince*, the sceptre that should rise out of Israel, as Balaam had foretold ; dying for the good of his people, as Caiaphas had foretold : Thus all these three ill men witnessed to Christ, though they meant not so.

2. The notice taken of this inscription, ver. 20. *Many of the Jews read it*, not only those of Jerusalem, but those out of the country, and from other countries, strangers and proselytes that came up to worship at the feast : Multitudes read it, and it occasioned a great variety of reflexions and speculations, as men stood affected. Christ himself was set for a sign, a title.

Here are two reasons why the title was so much read,

1. Because the place where Jesus was crucified, though without the gate, yet was *nigh the city* ; which intimates, that if it had been of any great distance off they would not have been led, no not by their curiosity, to go see it, and read it. It is an advantage to have the means of knowing Christ brought to our doors.

2. Because it was written in *Hebrew*, and *Greek*, and *Latin*, which made it legible by all, they all understand one or other of these languages, and none more careful to bring up their children to read than the Jews generally were. It likewise made it the more considerable ; every one would be curious to enquire what it was, which was so industriously published in the three most known languages. In the *Hebrew*, the oracles of God were recorded ; in *Greek*, the learning of the philosophers ; and, in *Latin*, the laws of the empire : In each of these Christ is proclaimed king, in whom are hid all the treasures of *revelation*, *wisdom*, and *power*. God so ordering it that this should be written in the three then most known tongues, it was intimated thereby, that Jesus Christ should be a *Saviour to all nations*, and not to the Jews only ; and also that every nation should hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of the Redeemer. *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin*, were the vulgar languages at that time in this part of the world ; so that this is so far from intimating (as the Papists would have it) that the scripture is still to be retained in these three languages, that on the contrary it teaches us that the knowledge of Christ ought to be diffused throughout every nation in their own tongue, as the proper vehicle of it, that people may converse as freely with the scriptures, as they do with their neighbours.

3. The offence which the prosecutors took at it, ver. 21. They would not have it written, *the king of the Jews* ; but that he said of himself, *I am king of the Jews*. Here they shew themselves, 1. Very spiteful and malicious against Christ. It was not enough to have him crucified, but they must have this name crucified too,

to justify themselves in giving him such ill treatment, they thought themselves concerned to give him an ill character, and to represent him as a usurper of honours and powers that he was not intitled to. 2. Foolishly jealous of the honour of their nation ; though they were a conquered and enslaved people, yet they stood so much upon the punctilio of their reputation, that they scorned to have it said, that this was their king. 3. They shew themselves very impertinent and troublesome to Pilate ; they could not but be sensible that they had forced him against his mind to condemn Christ, and yet, in such a trivial thing as this, they continue to tease him : And it was so much the worse, in that, though they had charged him with pretending to be *the king of the Jews*, yet they had not proved it, nor had he ever said so.

4. The judge's resolution to adhere to it : *What I have written, I have written*, and will not alter it to humour them.

(1.) Hereby an affront was put upon the chief priests, who would still be dictating. It seems, by Pilate's manner of speaking, that he was uneasy in himself for yielding to them, and vexed at them for forcing him to it ; and therefore he was resolved to be cross with them ; and, by this inscription, insinuates, 1. That, notwithstanding their pretences, they were not sincere in their affections to Cesar, and his government ; they were willing enough to have a *king of the Jews*, if they could have one to their mind. 2. That such a king as this, so mean and despicable, was good enough to be *the king of the Jews* ; and this would be the fate of all that should dare to oppose the Roman power. 3. That they had been very unjust and unreasonable in prosecuting this Jesus, when there was *no fault to be found in him*.

(2.) Hereby honour was done to the Lord Jesus. Pilate stuck to it with resolution, *that he was the king of the Jews* ; what he had written, was what God had first written, and therefore he could not alter ; for thus it was written, *that Messiah the prince shall be cut off*, Dan. ix. 26. This therefore is the true cause of his death ; he dies, because the king of Israel must die, must thus die. When the Jews reject Christ, and will not have him for their king, Pilate, a Gentile, sticks to it that he is a king ; which was an earnest of what came to pass soon after, when the Gentiles submitted to the kingdom of the Messiah, which the unbelieving Jews had rebelled against.

Secondly, The dividing of his garments among the executioners, ver. 23, 24. Four soldiers were employed, who, when they had crucified Jesus, had nailed him to the cross, and lifted it up, and him upon it, and nothing more was to be done but to wait his expiring through the extremity of pain, as, with us, when the prisoner is turned off, then they went to make a dividend of his clothes, each claiming an equal share, and so they made four parts, as near of the same value as they could, *to every soldier a part* ; but his coat, or upper garment, whether cloke or gown, being a pretty piece of curiosity, *without seam, woven from the top throughout* ; they agreed to cast lots for that. Here observe,

1. The shame they put upon our Lord Jesus, in stripping him of his garments before they crucified him. The shame of nakedness came in with sin. He therefore who was *made sin for us*, bare that shame, to roll away our reproach. He was stripped, that we might be clothed with *white raiment*, Rev. iii. 18. and that when we are unclothed, *we may not be found naked*.

2. The wages with which these soldiers paid themselves for crucifying Christ : They were willing to do it for his old clothes. Nothing is to be done so ill, but there will be found men ill enough to do it for a trifle. Probably, they hoped to make more than ordinary advantage of his clothes, having heard of cures wrought by the touch of the hem of his garment ; or, expecting that his admirers would give any money for them.

3. The sport they made about his seamless coat ; we read not of any thing about him valuable or remarkable but that, and that not for the richness, but only the variety of it, for it was woven from the top throughout ; no curiosity therefore in the shape, but an affected plainness. Tradition saith, his mother wove it him, and adds this further, that it was made for him when he was a child, and, like the Israelites clothes in the wilderness, *waxed not old* ; but that is a groundless fancy. The soldiers thought it pity to rend it, for then it would unravel, and a piece of it would be good for nothing ; they would therefore cast lots for it. While Christ was in his dying agonies, they were merrily dividing his spoils.

The preserving of Christ's seamless coat is commonly alluded to, to shew the care all Christians ought to take that they rend not the church of Christ with *strifes and divisions* ; yet some have observed, that the reason why the soldiers would not rend Christ's coat, was not out of any respect to Christ, but because each of them hoped to have it entire for themselves : And so many cry out against schism, only that they may engross all the wealth and power to themselves. Those who opposed Luther's separation from the church of Rome, urged much the *tunica inconsutilis*, the seamless coat ; and some of them laid so much stress upon it, that they were called the *Inconsutiles*.

4. The fulfilling of the scripture in this. David, in spirit, foretold this very circumstance of Christ's sufferings, in that passion, Psalm xxii. The event so exactly answering the prediction, proves, 1. That the scripture is the word of God, which foretold contingent events concerning Christ so long before, and they came to pass according to the prediction. 2. That Jesus is the true Messiah ; for



in him all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the *Messiah* had, and have their full accomplishments. *These things therefore the soldiers did.*

Thirdly, The care that he took of his poor mother.

(1.) *His mother* attends him to his death, *ver. 25.* *There stood by the cross,* as near as they could get, *his mother,* and some of his relations and friends with her. At first they stood near, as it is said here; but, it is probable, afterwards *the soldiers* forced them to *stand afar off,* as it is said in Matthew and Mark; or they themselves removed out of the ground.

1. See here the tender affection of these pious women to our Lord Jesus in his sufferings: When all his disciples, except John, had forsaken him, they continued their attendance on him. Thus *the feeble were as David,* Zech. xii. 8. they were not deterred by the fury of the enemy, or the horror of the sight; they could not rescue him, or relieve him, yet they attended him to shew their good will. It is an impious and blasphemous construction which some of the popish writers put upon the virgin Mary standing by *the cross,* that thereby she contributed to the satisfaction he made for sin, no less than he did; and to become a joint-mediatrix and co-adjutrix in our salvation.

2. We must easily suppose what an affliction it was to those poor women to see him thus abused, especially to the blessed Virgin. Now was fulfilled Simeon's word, *A sword shall pierce through thine own soul,* Luke ii. 35. His torments were her tortures; she was upon the rack, while he was upon *the cross;* and her heart bled with his wounds; and *the reproaches wherewith they reproached him,* fell on them that attended him.

3. We may justly admire the power of divine grace in supporting these women, especially the virgin Mary, under this heavy trial. We do not find *his mother* wringing her hands, or tearing her hair, or rending her clothes, or making an outcry; but, with a wonderful composure, *standing by the cross,* and her friends with her. Surely she and they were strengthened by a divine power to this degree of patience; and surely the virgin Mary had a fuller expectation of his resurrection than the rest had, which supported her thus. We know not what we can bear till we are tried, and then we know who has said, *My grace is sufficient for thee.*

(2.) He tenderly provides for *his mother* at his death. It is probable, Joseph, her husband, was long since dead, and that her son, Jesus, had supported her, and her relation to him had been her maintenance; and now he was dying, what would become of her? He saw her standing by, and knew her cares and griefs; and he saw John standing not far off, and so he settled a new relation between his beloved mother, and his beloved disciple; for he said to her, *Woman, behold thy son;* for whom henceforward thou must have a motherly affection; and to him, *Behold thy mother;* to whom thou must pay a filial duty: And so, *from that hour, that hour,* never to be forgotten, *that disciple took her to his own home.* See here,

1. The care Christ took of *his dear mother.* He was not so much taken up with a sense of his sufferings as to forget his friends; all whose concerns he bore upon his heart. *His mother,* perhaps, was so taken up with his sufferings, that she thought not what would become of her; but he admitted that thought. *Silver and gold he had none* to leave, no estate, real or personal; his clothes *the soldiers* had seized, and we hear no more of the bag since Judas, that had carried it, *hanged himself.* He had therefore no other way to provide for *his mother,* but by his interest in a friend, which he doth here.

(1.) He calls her *woman,* not *mother,* not out of any disrespect to her, but because *mother* would have been a cutting word to her that was already wounded to the heart with grief; like Isaac saying to Abraham, *My father.* He speaks as one that was *now no more in this world,* but was already dead to those in it that were dearest to him. His speaking in this seemingly slight manner to *his mother,* as he had done formerly, was designed to obviate and give check to the undue honours which he foresaw would be given her in the Romish church, as if she were a joint-purchaser with him in the honours of the Redeemer.

(2.) He directs her to look upon John as her son: *Behold him as thy son,* who stands there by thee, and be as a mother to him. See here, 1. An instance of divine goodness to be observed for our encouragement. Sometimes, when God removes one comfort from us, he raiseth up another for us, perhaps, there, where we looked not for it. We read of children which the church shall have after she has lost the other, *Isa. xlix. 21.* Let none therefore reckon all gone with one cistern dried up, for, from the same fountain, another may be filled. 2. An instance of filial duty to be observed for our imitation. Christ has here taught children, to the utmost of their power, to provide for the comfort of their aged parents. When David was in distress, he took care of his parents, and found out a shelter for them, *1 Sam. xxii. 3.* so *the Son of David* here. Children, at their death, according to their ability, should provide for their parents, if they survive them, and need their kindness.

2. The confidence he reposed in the beloved disciple. It is to him he saith, *Behold thy mother,* i. e. I recommend her to thy care; be thou as a son to her, to guide her, *Isa. li. 18.* and not to forsake her when she is old, *Prov. xxiii. 22.* Now, 1. This was an honour put upon John, and a testimony both to his prudence,

and to his fidelity: If he, who *knows all things,* had not known that John loved him, he would not have made him *his mother's* guardian. It is a great honour to be employed for Christ, and to be trusted with any of his interest in the world. But, 2. It would be a care and some charge to John, but he cheerfully accepted it, and took her to his own home, not objecting the trouble or expence, or his obligations to his own family, or the ill will he might contract by it. Note, Those that truly love Christ, and are loved of him, will be glad of an opportunity to do any service to him, or his. *Nicephorus's Eccl. Hist. lib. ii. cap. iii.* saith, that the virgin Mary lived with John at Jerusalem eleven years, and then died. Others, that she lived to remove with him to Ephesus.

Fourthly, The fulfilling of the scripture in the giving of him *vinegar to drink,* *ver. 28, 29.* Observe,

1. How much respect Christ shewed to the scripture, *ver. 28.* *Knowing that all things hitherto were accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled,* which spake of his drinking in his sufferings, *he saith, I thirst,* that is, he called for drink.

(1.) It was not at all strange that he was *thirsty;* we find him *thirsty* in a journey, *John iv. 6, 7.* and now *thirsty* when he was just at his journey's end. Well might he *thirst,* after all the toil and hurry which he had undergone; and being now in the agonies of death, ready to expire, purely by the loss of blood, and extremity of pain. The torments of hell are represented by a violent *thirst* in the complaint of *the rich man,* that begged for a drop of water to cool his tongue. To that everlasting *thirst* we had been condemned, had not Christ suffered for us.

(2.) But the reason of his complaining of it is somewhat surprising; it is the only word he spoke that looked like complaint of his outward sufferings: When they scourged him, and crowned him with thorns, he did not cry, O my head, or my back! but now he cried, *I thirst.* For, 1. He would thus express *the travail of his soul,* *Isa. liii. 11.* He thirsted after the glorifying of God, and the accomplishment of *the work of our redemption,* and the happy issue of his undertaking. 2. He would thus take care to see the scripture fulfilled. Hitherto all had been accomplished, and he knew it; for this was the thing he had carefully observed all along; and now he called to mind one thing more, which this was the proper season for the performance of. By this it appears he was *the Messiah,* in that not only the scripture was punctually fulfilled in him, but it was strictly eyed by him. By this it appears that God was with him of a truth, that in all he did he went exactly according to the word of God, taking care not to destroy, but to fulfil the law and the prophets.

Now, 1. The scripture has foretold his *thirst,* and therefore he himself related it, because it could not otherwise be known, saying, *I thirst;* it was foretold, *that his tongue should cleave to his jaws,* Psalm xxii. 15. Sampson, an eminent type of Christ, when he was laying the Philistines heaps upon heaps, was himself sore athirst, *Judg. xv. 18.* so was Christ, when he was upon *the cross,* spoiling principalities and powers.

2. The scripture had foretold, *that in his thirst he should have vinegar given him to drink,* Psalm lxix. 21. *They had given him vinegar to drink before they crucified him,* Matt. xxvii. 34. but the prophecy was not exactly fulfilled in that, because that was not in his thirst; therefore now he said, *I thirst,* and called for it again; then he would not drink, but now he received it. Christ would rather court an affront, than see any prophecy unfulfilled. This should satisfy us under all our trials, that the will of God is done, and the word of God accomplished.

2. See how little respect his persecutors shewed to him, *ver. 29.* *There was set a vessel full of vinegar,* probably, according to the custom at all executions of this nature; or, as others think, it was now set designedly for an abuse to Christ, instead of the cup of wine, which they used to give to them that were ready to perish; with that they filled a sponge, for they would not allow him a cup, and they put it upon hyssop, an hyssop-stalk, and with that heaved it to his mouth; *ὁσώπω περιέβητες,* they stuck it round with hyssop, so it may be taken; or, as others, they mingled it with hyssop-water, and this they gave him to drink, when he was thirsty; a drop of water would have cooled his tongue, better than a draught of vinegar; yet this he submitted to for us; he had taken the sour grapes, and thus his teeth were set on edge; we had forfeited all comforts and refreshments, and therefore they were withheld from him; when heaven denied him a beam of light, earth denied him a drop of water, and put vinegar in the room of it.

Fifthly, The dying word wherewith he breathed out his soul, *ver. 30.* *When he had received the vinegar,* as much of it as he thought fit, he said, *It is finished;* and with that, bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. Observe,

(1.) What he said, and we may suppose him to say it with triumph and exultation, *πέτελει,* *It is finished,* a comprehensive word, and a comfortable one.

1. *It is finished,* that is, the malice and enmity of his persecutors had now done its worst; when he had received that last indignity in the vinegar they gave him, he said, this is the last, I am now going out of their reach, where the wicked cease from troubling.

2. *It is finished,* i. e. the counsel and commandment of his Father concerning his sufferings was now fulfilled; it was a determinate



nate counsel; and he took care to see every iota and tittle of it exactly answered, *Acts* ii. 23. He had said, when he entered upon his sufferings, *Father, thy will be done*; and now he saith, with pleasure, *It is done*. It was his meat and drink to finish his work, *John* iv. 34. and the meat and drink refreshed him, when they gave him gall and vinegar.

3. *It is finished*, i. e. all the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, which pointed at the sufferings of the Messiah, were accomplished and answered. He speaks as if, now they had given him the vinegar, he could not bethink himself of any word in the Old Testament that was to be fulfilled betwixt him and his death, but it had its accomplishment, e. g. his being sold for thirty pieces of silver, his hands and feet pierced, his garments divided, &c. and now this is done, it is finished.

4. *It is finished*, i. e. the ceremonial law is abolished, and a period put to the obligation of it; the substance is now come, and all the shadows are done away: Just now the veil is rent, the wall of partition is taken down, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, *Eph.* ii. 14, 15. The Mosaic economy is dissolved, to make way for a better hope.

5. *It is finished*, i. e. sin is finished, and an end made of transgression, by the bringing in of an everlasting righteousness. It seems to refer to *Dan.* ix. 24. The Lamb of God was sacrificed to take away the sin of the world, and it is done, *Heb.* ix. 26.

6. *It is finished*, i. e. his sufferings were now finished, both those of his soul, and those of his body; the storm is over, the worst is past; all his pains and agonies are at an end, and he is just going to paradise, entering upon the joy set before him. Let all that suffer for Christ, and with Christ, comfort themselves with this, that yet a little while, and they also shall say, *It is finished*.

7. *It is finished*, i. e. his life was now finished, he was just ready to breathe his last, and now he is no more in this world, *John* xvii. 11. This is like that of blessed Paul, *2 Tim.* iv. 7. *I have finished my course*, my race is run, my glass is out, *mene, mene*, numbered, and finished. This we must all come to shortly.

8. *It is finished*, i. e. the work of man's redemption and salvation is now compleated, at least, the hardest part of the undertaking is over; a full satisfaction is made to the justice of God, a fatal blow given to the power of Satan, a fountain of grace opened that shall ever flow, a foundation of peace and happiness laid that shall never fail. Christ had now gone through with his work, and finished it, *John* xvii. 4. For, as for God, his work is perfect; when I begin (saith he) I will also make an end. And as in the purchase, so in the application of the redemption, he that has begun a good work, will perform it; the mystery of God shall be finished.

(2.) What he did; he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. He was voluntary in dying; for he was not only the sacrifice, but the priest, and the offerer; and the *animus offerentis* was all in all in the sacrifice: Christ shewed his will in his sufferings; by the which will we are sanctified.

1. He gave up the ghost. His life was not forcibly extorted from him, but freely resigned. He had said, *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit*; thereby expressing the intention of this act: I give up my self as a ransom for many; and accordingly he did give up his spirit, paid down the price of pardon and life at his Father's hands: *Father, glorify thy name*.

2. He bowed his head. They that were crucified, in dying, stretched up their heads to gasp for breath, and did not drop their heads till they had breathed their last; but Christ, to shew himself active in dying, bowed his head first, composing himself, as it were, to fall asleep. God had laid upon him the iniquity of us all, putting them upon the head of this great sacrifice; and, some think, by this bowing of his head, he would intimate his sense of the weight upon him: See *Psalms* xxxviii. 4.—xl. 12. The bowing of his head shews his submission to his Father's will, and his obedience to death: He accommodated himself to his dying work, as Jacob, who gathered up his feet to the bed, and then yielded up the ghost.

31. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the crosses on the sabbath-day (for that sabbath-day was an high day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. 34. But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. 35. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36. For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

This passage, concerning the piercing of Christ's side after his death, is recorded only by this evangelist.

First, Observe the superstition of the Jews, which occasioned it, *ver.* 31. Because it was the preparation for the sabbath, and that sabbath-day, because it fell in the passover week, was a high day; that they might shew a veneration for the sabbath, would not have the dead bodies to remain on the crosses on the sabbath-day, but besought Pilate that their legs might be broke, which would be a certain, but cruel dispatch, and that then they might be buried out of sight.

Note here, 1. The esteem they would be thought to have for the approaching sabbath, because it was one of the days of unleavened bread, and (some reckon) the day of the offering of the first-fruits. Every sabbath-day is a holy day, and a good day, but this was a high day, *μεγάλη ἡμέρα*, a great day. Passover sabbaths are high days, sacrament days, supper days; communion days are high days, and there ought to be more than ordinary preparation for them, that these may be high days, indeed to us, as the days of heaven.

2. The reproach which they reckoned it would be to that day, if the dead bodies should be left hanging upon the crosses. Dead bodies were not to be left any time, *Deut.* xxi. 23. yet, in this case, the Jews would have left the Roman custom to take place, had it not been an extraordinary day; and many strangers from all parts being then at Jerusalem, it would have been an offence to them; nor could they well bear the sight of Christ's crucified body, for, unless their consciences were quite seared, when the heat of their rage was a little over, they would upbraid them.

3. Their petition to Pilate, that their bodies, now as good as dead, might be dispatched; not by strangling or beheading them, which would have been a compassionate hastening them out of their misery, like the *coup de grace* (as the French call it) to them that are broke upon the wheel, the stroke of mercy, but by the breaking of their legs, which would carry them off in the more exquisite pain. Note, 1. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. 2. The pretended sanctity of hypocrites is abominable. These Jews would be thought to bear a great regard to the sabbath, and yet had no regard to justice and righteousness; they made no conscience of bringing an innocent and excellent person to the cross, and yet scrupled letting a dead body hang upon the crosses.

Secondly, The dispatch of the two thieves that were crucified with him, *ver.* 32. Pilate was still gratifying the Jews, and gave orders as they desired; and the soldiers came, hardened against all impressions of pity, and broke the legs of the two thieves, which, no doubt, extorted from them hideous outcries, and made them die, according to the bloody disposition of Nero, so as to feel themselves die. One of these thieves was a penitent, and had received from Christ an assurance that he should shortly be with him in paradise, and yet died in the same pain and misery that the other thief did; for all things come alike to all; many go to heaven that have bands in their death, and die in the bitterness of their soul: The extremity of dying agonies is no obstruction to the living comforts that wait for holy souls on the other side death: Christ died, and went to paradise, but appointed a guard to convey him thither. This is the order of going to heaven, Christ, the first-fruits, and forerunner, afterwards they that are Christ's.

Thirdly, The trial that was made whether Christ was dead or no, and the putting of it out of doubt.

1. They supposed him to be dead, and therefore did not break his legs, *ver.* 33. Observe here, 1. That Jesus died in less time than persons crucified ordinarily did: The structure of his body, perhaps, being extraordinary fine and tender, was the sooner broke by pain; or rather, it was to shew that he laid down his life of himself, and could die when he pleased, though his hands were nailed: Though he yielded to death, yet he was not conquered. 2. That his enemies were satisfied he was really dead. The Jews, who stood by to see the execution effectually done, would not have balked this piece of cruelty, if they had not been sure he was got out of the reach of it. 3. Whatever devices are in mens hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand. It was fully designed to break his legs, but God's counsel being otherwise, see how it was prevented.

2. Because they would be sure he was dead, they made such an experiment as would put it past dispute; One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, aiming at his heart, and forthwith came there out blood and water, *ver.* 34.

(1.) The soldier hereby designed to decide the question whether he was dead or no, and, by this honourable wound in his side, to supersede the ignominious method of dispatch they took with the other two. Tradition saith, this soldier's name was Longinus, and that, having some distemper in his eyes, he was immediately cured of it, by some drops of blood that flowed out of Christ's side lighting on them: Significant enough, if we had any good authority for the story.

(2.) But God had a further design herein, which was,

1. To give an evidence of the truth of his death, in order to the proof of his resurrection. If he was only in a trance or swoon, his resurrection was a sham; but, by this experiment, he was certainly dead, for this spear broke up the very fountains of life, and, according to all the law and course of nature, it was impossible a human



human body should survive such a wound as this in the vitals, and such an evacuation thence.

2. To give an illustration of *the design of his death*: There was much of mystery in it, and its being so solemnly attested, *ver. 35*. intimates, there was something miraculous in it, that *the blood and water* should come out distinct and separate from the same wound; however, that was very significant; this same apostle refers to it as a very considerable thing, *1 John v. 6, 8*.

(1.) The opening of *his side* was significant. When we would protest our sincerity, we wish there were a window in our hearts, that the thoughts and intents of them might be visible to all. Through this window, opened in *Christ's side*, you may look into his heart, and see love flaming there, *love strong as death*; see our own names written there. Some make it an allusion to the opening of Adam's side in innocency: When *Christ, the second Adam, was fallen into a deep sleep upon the cross*, then was *his side* opened, and out of it was his church taken, which he espoused to himself: See *Eph. v. 30, 32*. Our devout poet, Mr. George Herbert, in his poem called *the bag*, very affectingly brings in our Saviour, when *his side was pierced*, thus speaking to his disciples.

If ye have any thing to send, or write,  
(I have no bag, but here is room)  
Unto my Father's hands and sight,  
(Believe me) it shall safely come.  
That I shall mind what you impart,  
Look, you may put it very near my heart;  
Or if hereafter any of my friends  
Will use me in this kind, the door  
Shall still be open; what he sends  
I will present, and somewhat more,  
Not to his hurt. Sighs will convey  
Any thing to me. Hark, despair away.

(2.) The blood and water that flowed out of it were significant:

1. They signified the two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ, justification, and sanctification; *blood* for remission, *water* for regeneration; *blood* for atonement, *water* for purification: *Blood and water* were used very much under the law. Guilt contracted must be expiated by *blood*; stains contracted must be done away by the *water of purification*: These two must always go together, *Ye are sanctified, ye are justified, 1 Cor. vi. 11*. Christ has joined them together, and we must not think to put them asunder: They both flow from the pierced side of our Redeemer. To Christ crucified, we owe both merit for our justification, and Spirit and grace for our sanctification; and we have as much need of the latter as of the former, *1 Cor. i. 30*.

2. They signified the two great ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper, by which those benefits are represented, sealed, and applied to believers; they both owe their institution and efficacy to Christ: It is not the *water* in the font that will be to us the washing of regeneration, but the *water out of the side of Christ*; not the *blood of the grape* that will pacify the conscience, and refresh the soul, but the *blood out of the side of Christ*. Now was the rock smitten, *1 Cor. x. 4*. now was the fountain opened, *Zech. xiii. 1*. now were the wells of salvation digged, *Isa. xlii. 3*. Here is the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God.

Fourthly, The attestation of the truth of this by an eye-witness, *ver. 35*. the evangelist himself. Observe,

(1.) What a competent witness he was of the matters of fact: 1. What he bare record of he saw; he had it not by hearsay, or was it only his own conjecture, but he was an eye-witness of it; it is what we have seen and looked upon, *1 John i. 1*. *2 Pet. i. 16*. and had perfect understanding of, *Luke i. 3*. 2. What he saw he faithfully bare record of; as a faithful witness, he told not only the truth, but the whole truth; and did not only attest it by word of mouth, but left it upon record in writing, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*. 3. His record is undoubtedly true; for he wrote not only from his own personal knowledge and observation, but from the dictates of the Spirit of truth, that leads into all truth. 4. He had himself a full assurance of the truth of what he wrote, and did not persuade others to believe that which he did not believe himself; he knows that he saith true. 5. He therefore witnessed these things that we might believe; he did not record them merely for his own satisfaction, or the private use of his friends, but made them publick to the world; not to please the curious, or entertain the ingenious, but to draw men to believe the gospel in order to their eternal welfare.

(2.) What care he shewed in this particular instance. That we may be well assured, both of the truth of Christ's death, he saw his heart's blood, his life's blood let out; and also of the benefits that flow to us from his death, signified by the blood and water which came out of his side. Let this silence the fears of weak Christians, and encourage their hopes, *iniquity shall not be their ruin*, for there came both water and blood out of Christ's pierced side, both to justify and sanctify them; and if you ask, how can we be sure of this? you may be sure, for he that saw it bare record.

Fifthly, The accomplishment of the scripture in all this, *ver. 36*. That the scripture should be fulfilled, and so both the honour

of the Old Testament may be preserved, and the truth of the New Testament confirmed. Here are two instances of it together.

(1.) The scripture was fulfilled, in the preserving of his legs from being broke; therein that word was fulfilled, *A bone of him shall not be broken*.

1. There was a promise of this made indeed to all the righteous, but principally pointing at Jesus Christ the righteous, *Psal. xxxiv. 20*. He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken. And David in spirit saith, *All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, Psalm xxxv. 10*.

2. There was a type of this in the paschal lamb, which seems to be especially referred to here, *Exod. xii. 46*. Neither shall ye break a bone thereof; and it is repeated, *Numb. ix. 12*. Ye shall not break any bone of it; for which law the will of the law-maker is the reason, but the antitype must answer the type. Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us, *1 Cor. v. 7*. He is the Lamb of God, *John i. 29*. and, as the true passover, his bones were kept unbroken. This commandment was given concerning his bones, when dead, as of Joseph's, *Heb. xi. 22*.

3. There was a significancy in it, the strength of the body is in the bones, the Hebrew word for the bones signifies the strength, and therefore not a bone of Christ must be broken, to shew, that though he be crucified in weakness, his strength to save is not at all broken: Sin breaks our bones, it broke David's, *Psal. li. 8*. but it did not break his bones; he stood firm under the burthen, mighty to save.

(2.) The scripture was fulfilled in the piercing of his side, *ver. 37*. They shall look on him whom they have pierced, so it is written, *Zech. xii. 10*. And there the same that pours out the Spirit of grace, and can be no less than the God of the holy prophets, saith, *They shall look upon me*, which is here applied to Christ, *they shall look upon him*. 1. It is here implied, that the Messiah shall be pierced; and here it had a more full accomplishment, than in the piercing of his hands and feet; he was pierced by the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, wounded in the house of his friends, as it follows, *Zech. xiii. 6*. 2. It is promised, that when the Spirit is poured out, they shall look on him and mourn. This was, in part, fulfilled, when many of those that were his betrayers and murderers were pricked to the heart, and brought to believe in him; it will be further fulfilled in mercy, when all Israel shall be saved; and in wrath, when they who persisted in their infidelity shall see him whom they have pierced, and wail because of him, *Rev. i. 7*. But it is applicable to us all; we have all been guilty of piercing the Lord Jesus, and are all concerned with suitable affections to look on him.

38. ¶ And after this, Joseph of Arimathea (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews) besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave: he came therefore and took the body of Jesus. 39. And there came also Nicodemus (which at the first came to Jesus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41. Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42. There laid they Jesus therefore, because of the Jews preparation-day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

We have here an account of the burial of the blessed body of our Lord Jesus. The solemn funerals of great men use to be looked at with curiosity; the mournful funerals of dear friends use to be attended with concern: Come, come see an extraordinary funeral, never was the like! Come and see a burial that conquered the grave, and buried it! a burial that beautified the grave, and softened it for all believers! Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight. Here is,

First, The body begged, *ver. 38*. This was done by the interest of Joseph of Ramah, or Arimathea, of whom no mention is made in all the New Testament story, but only in the narrative which each of the evangelists gives us of Christ's burial, wherein he was chiefly concerned. Observe,

1. The character of this Joseph. He was a disciple of Christ incognito, a better friend to Christ than he would willingly be known to be. It was his honour that he was a disciple of Christ; and some such there are, that are themselves great men, and unavoidably linked with ill men; but it was his weakness that he was so secretly, when he should have confessed Christ before men, yea, though he had lost his preferment by it. Disciples should openly own themselves, yet Christ may have many that are his disciples secretly, though secretly; better secretly than not at all, especially, if, like Joseph here, they grow stronger and stronger. Some who in lesser trials have been timorous, yet in greater have been very courageous; so Joseph here. He concealed his affection to Christ

for



for fear of the Jews, lest they should put him out of the synagogue, at least out of the Sanhedrin, which was all they could do. To Pilate the governor he went boldly, and yet feared the Jews. The impotent malice of those that can but censure and revile, and clamour, is sometimes more formidable even to wise and good men than one would think.

2. The part he bore in this affair. He having by his place access to Pilate, desired leave of him to dispose of the body. His mother and dear relations have neither spirit nor interest to attempt such a thing. His disciples were gone; if no body appear, the Jews, or soldiers would bury him with the thieves; therefore God raised up this gentleman to interpose in it, that the scripture might be fulfilled, and the decorum owing to his approaching resurrection maintained. Note, When God has work to do, he can find out such as are proper to do it, and spirit them for it. Observe, It as an instance of the humiliation of Christ, that his dead body lay at the mercy of a heathen judge, and must be begged before it could be buried. And also, that Joseph would not take the body of Christ till he had asked, and obtained leave of the governor; for in those things wherein the power of the magistrate is concerned, we must ever pay a deference to that power, and peaceably submit to it.

Secondly, The embalming prepared, *ver.* 39. This was done by Nicodemus, another person of quality, and in a publick post. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, which some think bitter ingredients to preserve the body, others fragrant ones to perfume it. Here is,

1. The character of Nicodemus, which is much the same with that of Joseph; he was a secret friend to Christ, though not his constant follower. He at first came to Jesus by night, but now owned him publickly, as before, *John* vii. 51. That grace which at first is like a bruised reed, may afterwards become like a strong cedar; and the trembling lambs bold as a lion. See *Rom.* xiv. 4. It is a wonder that Joseph and Nicodemus, men of such interest, did not appear sooner, and solicit Pilate not to condemn Christ, especially, seeing him so loth to it. Begging his life would have been a nobler piece of service than begging his body; but Christ would have none of his friends to endeavour to prevent his death when his hour was come. While his persecutors were forwarding the accomplishment of the scriptures, his followers must not obstruct it.

2. The kindness of Nicodemus, which was considerable, though of a different nature. Joseph served Christ with his interest, Nicodemus with his purse. Probably they agreed it between them, that while one was procuring the grant, the other should be preparing the spices; and that for expedition, because they were straitened in time.

But why did they make this ado about Christ's dead body?

1. Some think we may see in it the *weakness of their faith*. A firm belief of the resurrection of Christ the third day, would have saved them this care and cost, and have been more acceptable than all spices. Those bodies indeed to whom the grave is a long home, need to be clad accordingly; but what need of such furniture of the grave for one, that like a way-faring man, did but turn aside into it, to tarry for a night, or two?

2. However, we may plainly see in it the *strength of their love*. Hereby they shewed the value they had for his person and doctrine, and that it was not lessened by the reproach of the cross. They that had been so industrious to profane his crown, and lay his honour in the dust, may already see that they imagine a vain thing; for as God had done him honour in his sufferings, so did men too, even great men. They shewed not only the charitable respects of committing his body to the earth, but the honourable respects shewed to great men. This they might do, and yet believe and look for his resurrection; nay, this they might do in the belief and expectation of it. Since God designed honour for this body, they would put upon it. However, we must do our duty according as the present day and opportunity is, and leave it to God to fulfil his promises in his own way and time.

Thirdly, The body got ready, *ver.* 40. They took it into some house adjoining, and having washed it from blood and dust, wound it in linen clothes very decently, with the spices melted down, it is likely, into an ointment, as the manner of the Jews is to bury, or to embalm, so Dr. Hammond, as we fear dead bodies.

1. Here was care taken of Christ's body, it was wound in linen clothes. Among other clothing that belongs to us, Christ put on even the grave clothes, to make them easy to us, and to enable us to call them our wedding clothes. They wound the body with the spices, for all his garments, his grave-clothes not excepted, smell of myrrh and aloes; the spices here mentioned out of the ivory palaces, *Psal.* xlv. 8. and an ivory palace the sepulchre hewn out of a rock was to Christ. Dead bodies and graves use to be noisome and offensive; hence sin is compared to a body of death, and an open sepulchre; but Christ's sacrifice being to God as a sweet smelling favour hath taken away our pollution. No ointment or perfume can rejoice the heart, so as the grave of our Redeemer doth, where there is faith to perceive the fragrant odours of it.

2. In conformity to this example, we ought to have regard to the dead bodies of Christians; not to enshrine and adore their reliques, no not those of the most eminent saints and martyrs; nothing like that was done to the dead body of Christ himself, but carefully deposited, the dust in the dust, as those who believe the dead bodies of the saints are still united to Christ, and designed for glory and immortality at the last day. The resurrection of the saints will be in the virtue of Christ's resurrection, and therefore in burying them we should have an eye to Christ's burial, for he being dead thus speaketh. *Thy dead men shall live, Isa.* xxvi. 19. In burying our dead it is not necessary that in all circumstances, we imitate the burial of Christ, as if we must be buried in linen, and in a garden, and be embalmed as he was; but he being buried after the manner of the Jews, it teacheth us, that in things of this nature we should conform to the usages of the country where we live, except in those that are superstitious.

Fourthly, The grave pitched upon, in a garden which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, very near the place where he was crucified. There was a sepulchre, or vault prepared for the first occasion, but not yet used. Observe,

1. That Christ was buried without the city, for thus the manner of the Jews was to bury, not in their cities, much less in their synagogues, which some have thought better than our way of burying, yet there was then a peculiar reason for it, which doth not hold now, because the tomb of a grave contracted a ceremonial pollution; but now the resurrection of Christ has altered the property of the grave, and done away its pollution for all believers, we need not keep at such a distance from it; nor is it incapable of a good improvement, to have the congregation of the dead in the church-yard, encompassing the congregation of the living in the church, since they also are dying, and in the midst of life we are in death. Those that would (not superstitiously but) by faith visit the holy sepulchre, must go forth out of the noise of this world.

2. That Christ was buried in a garden. Observe,

1. That Joseph had his sepulchre in his garden; so he contrived it, that it might be a memorandum, 1. To himself while living; when he was taking the pleasure of his garden, and reaping the products of it, let him think of dying, and be quickened to prepare for it. The garden is a proper place for meditation, and a sepulchre there may furnish us with a proper subject for meditation; and such a one as we are loth to admit in the midst of our pleasure. 2. To his heirs and successors when he was gone. It is good to acquaint ourselves with the place of our Father's sepulchres; and perhaps we might make our own less formidable, if we made theirs more familiar.

2. That in a sepulchre in a garden Christ's body was laid. In the garden of Eden death and the grave first received their power, and now in a garden they are conquered, disarmed, and triumphed over. In a garden Christ began his passion, and from a garden he would rise and begin his exaltation. Christ fell to the ground as a corn of wheat, *John* xii. 24. and therefore was sown in a garden among the seeds, for his dew is as the dew of herbs, *Isa.* xxvi. 19. He is the fountain of gardens, *Cant.* iv. 15.

3. That he was buried in a new sepulchre. This was so ordered, 1. For the honour of Christ; he was not a common person, and therefore must not mix with common dust. He that was born from a virgin womb, must rise from a virgin tomb. 2. For the confirming of the truth of his resurrection; that it might not be suggested that it was not he, but some other, that rose now, when many bodies of saints arose; or, that he rose by the power of some other, as the man that was raised by the touch of Elisha's bones, and not by his own power. He that has made all things new, has new made the grave for us.

Fifthly, The funeral solemnized. *Ver.* 42. There laid they Jesus, that is, the dead body of Jesus. Some think the calling of that Jesus intimates the inseparable union between the divine and human nature. Even this dead body was Jesus, a Saviour, for his death is our life; Jesus is still the same, *Heb.* xiii. 8. There they laid him because it was the preparation day.

1. Observe here the deference which the Jews paid to the sabbath, and to the day of preparation. Before the passover sabbath they had a solemn day of preparation. This day had been ill kept by the chief priests, who called themselves the church, but was well kept by the disciples of Christ, who were branded as dangerous to the church; and it is often so. 1. They would not put off the funeral till the sabbath day, because the sabbath is to be a day of holy rest and joy, with which the business and sorrow of a funeral do not well agree. 2. They would not drive it too late on the day of preparation for the sabbath. What is to be done the evening before the sabbath, should be so contrived, as that it may neither intrench upon sabbath-time, nor indispose us for sabbath-work.

2. Observe the convenience they took of an adjoining sepulchre; the sepulchre they made use of was nigh at hand. Perhaps if they had had time they would have carried him to Bethany, and buried him among his friends there. And I am sure he had more right to have been buried in the chief of the sepulchres of the sons of David, than any of the kings of Judah had; but it was so ordered,

that



that he should be laid in a sepulchre nigh at hand. Because he was to lie there but a while, as in an inn, and therefore he took the first that offered it self. 2. Because this was a *new-sepulchre*. They that prepared it, little thought who should hanfel it; but the wisdom of God has reaches infinitely beyond ours, and makes what use he pleaseth of us and all we have. 3. We are hereby taught not to be over curious in the place of our burial. Where the *tree falls* why should it not *lie*? For Christ was buried in the sepulchre that was *next at hand*. It was faith in the promise of Canaan, that directed the Patriarchs desire to be carried thither for a burying place; but now that promise is superseded by a better, that care is over.

Thus without pomp or solemnity is the body of Jesus laid in the cold and silent grave. Here lies our surety under arrest for our debts, so that if he be released his discharge will be ours. Here is the sun of righteousness set for a while to *rise again* in greater glory, and set no more. Here lies a seeming captive to death, but a real conqueror over death; for here lies death it self slain, and the grave conquered. *Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory.*

## C H A P. XX.

*This evangelist, though he began not his gospel as the rest did, yet concludes it as they did, with the history of Christ's resurrection; not of the thing it self, for none of them describe how he rose, but of the proofs and evidences of it, which demonstrated that he was risen. The proofs of Christ's resurrection which we have in this chapter, are, 1. Such as occurred immediately at the sepulchre. (1.) The sepulchre found empty, and the grave-clothes in good order, ver. 1,—10. (2.) Two angels appearing to Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, ver. 11,—13. (3.) Christ himself appearing to her, ver. 14,—18. 2. Such as occurred afterwards at the meetings of the apostles. (1.) At one, the same day at evening that Christ rose, when Thomas was absent, ver. 19,—25. At another, that day seven-night when Thomas was with them, ver. 26,—31. And what is related here is mostly what was omitted by the other evangelists.*

1. **T**HE first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene, early when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. 2. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. 3. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. 4. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. 5. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. 6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie; 7. And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by it self. 8. Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. 9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise from again the dead. 10. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

There was no one thing which the apostles were more concerned to produce substantial proof of, than the resurrection of their Master. 1. Because this was it which he himself had appealed to as the last and most cogent proof of his being the Messiah. They that would not believe other signs, were referred to this sign of the prophet Jonas. And therefore the enemies were most solicitous to stifle the notices of this, because it was put to this issue; and if he be risen, they are not only murderers, but murderers of the Messiah. 2. Because this was that upon which the performance of his undertaking for our redemption and salvation did depend. If he give his life a ransom, and do not resume it, it doth not appear that his giving of it was accepted as a satisfaction. If he be imprisoned for our debt, and lie by it, we are undone, 1 Cor. xv. 17. 3. Because he never shewed himself alive after his resurrection to all the people, Acts x. 40, 41. We would have said, let his ignominious death be private, and his glorious resurrection publick. But God's thoughts are not as ours; and he ordered it that his death should be publick, before the sun, by the same token that he blushed and hid his face upon it. But the demonstrations of his resurrection should be reserved as a favour for his particular friends, and by them be published to the world, that they might be blessed who have not seen and yet have believed. The method of proof is such as gives abundant satisfaction to those who are piously disposed to receive the doctrine and law of Christ, and yet leaves room for those to object

who are willingly ignorant and obstinate in their unbelief. And this is a fair trial, suited to the case of those who are probationers.

In these verses we have the first step towards the proof of Christ's resurrection, which is, that the sepulchre was found empty. *He is not here*, and if so, they must tell us where he is, or we conclude him *risen*.

First, Mary Magdalene coming to the sepulchre finds the *stone taken away*. This evangelist doth not mention the other woman that went with Mary Magdalene, but her only, because she was the most active and forward in this visit to the sepulchre, and in her appeared the most affection; and, 1. It was an affection kindled by a good cause, in consideration of the great things Christ had done for her. Much was forgiven her; therefore she loved much. 2. She had shewed her affection to him while he lived, attended his doctrine, ministered to him of her substance, Luke viii. 2, 3. It doth not appear she had any business now at Jerusalem; but to wait upon him, for the women were not bound to go up to the feast, and probably she and others now followed him the closer, as Elisha did Elijah, now they know their Master should shortly be *taken from their head*, 2 Kings ii. 1, 2. 3. The continued instances of her respect to him, at, and after his death, prove the sincerity of her love. Note, Love to Christ, if it be cordial, will be constant. Her love to Christ was *strong as death*, the death of the cross, for it stood by that; *cruel as the grave*, for it made a visit to that, and was not deterred by its terrors.

1. She came to the sepulchre to wash the dead body with her tears, for she went to the grave to weep there, and to anoint it with the ointment she had prepared. The grave is a house that people do not care for making visits to. They that are *free among the dead* are separated from the living; and it must be an extraordinary affection to the person which will *endear* his grave to us. It is especially frightful to the weak and timorous sex. Could she that had not strength enough to roll away the stone, pretend to such a presence of mind as to enter the grave. The Jews religion forbade them to meddle any more than needs must with graves and dead bodies. In visiting Christ's sepulchre she exposed her self, and perhaps the disciples, to the suspicion of a design to *steal him away*; and what real service could she do him by it? But her love answers these, and a thousand such objections. Note, 1. We must study to do honour to Christ in those things, wherein yet we cannot be profitable to him. 2. Love to Christ will take off the terror of death and the grave. If we cannot come to Christ but through that darksome valley, even in that, if we love him, we will *fear no evil*.

2. She came as soon as she could, for she came,

1. Upon the *first day of the week*, as soon as ever the sabbath was gone, longing not to sell corn, and to set forth wheat, as Amos viii. 5. but to be at the sepulchre. They that love Christ will take the first opportunity of testifying their respects to him. This was the first Christian sabbath, and she begins it accordingly, with enquiries after Christ. She had spent the day before in commemorating the work of creation, and therefore rested; but now she is upon search into the work of redemption, and therefore makes a visit to Christ and him crucified.

2. She came early, while it was yet dark; so early did she set out. Note, Those who would seek Christ so as to find him, must seek him early, i. e. 1. Seek him solicitously, with such a care as even breaks the sleep; be up early for fear of missing him. 2. Seek him industriously; we must deny ourselves and our own repose in pursuit of Christ. 3. Seek him betimes, early in our days, early every day, *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning*; that day is in a fair way to be well ended that is thus begun. They that diligently enquire after Christ while it is yet dark, shall have such light given them concerning him, as shall shine more and more.

3. She found the stone taken away, which she had seen rolled to the door of the sepulchre. Now this was,

1. A surprize to her; for she little expected it. Christ crucified is the fountain of life, his grave one of the wells of salvation, if we come to it in faith, though to a carnal heart it be a spring shut up, we shall find the stone rolled away, as Gen. xxix. 10. and free access to the comforts of it. Surprising comforts are the frequent encouragements of early seekers.

2. It was the beginning of a glorious discovery, the Lord was risen, though she did not at first apprehend it so. Note, 1. They that are most constant in their adherence to Christ, and most diligent in their enquiries after him, have commonly the first and sweetest notices of the divine grace. Mary Magdalene that followed Christ to the last, in his humiliation, met him with the first in his exaltation. 2. God ordinarily reveals himself and his comforts to us by degrees; to raise our expectations, and quicken our enquiries.

Secondly, Finding the stone taken away, she hastens back to Peter and John, who probably lodged together at that end of the town, not far off, and acquaints them with it; *They have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre*, envying him the honour of such a decent burying-place, and we know not where they have laid him, nor where to find him, that we may pay him the remainder of our last respects. Observe here,

I. What



1. What a notion Mary had of the thing as it now appeared; she found *the stone gone*; looked into the grave and saw it empty. Now one would expect that the first thought that offered it self should have been, *Surely the Lord is risen*, for whenever he had told them that he should be crucified, which she had now lately seen accomplished, he still subjoined in the same breath, that *the third day he should rise again*. Could she feel the great earthquake that happened as she was coming to the sepulchre, or getting ready to come, and now see the grave empty, and yet have no thought of the resurrection enter into her mind; what, no conjecture, no suspicion of it? So it seems by the odd construction she puts upon the removing of the stone, which was very far fetched. Note, When we come to reflect upon our own conduct in a *cloudy and dark day*, we shall stand amazed at our dulness and forgetfulness, that we could miss of such thoughts, as afterwards appear obvious, and how they could be so far out of the way, when we had occasion for them. She suggested, *They have taken away the Lord*; either the chief priests have taken him away, to put him in a worse place; or Joseph and Nicodemus have, upon second thoughts, taken him away, to avoid the ill will of the Jews. Whatever was her suspicion, it seems, it was a great vexation and disturbance to her, that the body was gone, whereas if she had understood it rightly, nothing could be more happy. Note, Weak believers often make that the matter of their complaint, which is really just ground of hope, and matter of joy. We cry out that this and the other creature comfort is *taken away*, and we know not how to retrieve it, when indeed the removal of our temporal comforts which we lament, is in order to the resurrection of our spiritual comforts, which we should rejoice in too.

2. What a narrative she made of it to Peter and John. She did not stand poring upon the grief her self, but acquaints her friends with it. Note, The communication of sorrows is one good improvement of the communion of saints. Observe, Peter, though he had denied his Master, had not deserted his Master's friends; by this appears the sincerity of his repentance, that he associated with the disciple whom Jesus loved. And the disciples keeping up their intimacy with him as formerly, notwithstanding his fall, teacheth us to *restore those with a spirit of meekness that have been faulty*. If God has received them upon their repentance, why should not we?

Thirdly, Peter and John go with all speed to the sepulchre to satisfy themselves of the truth of what was told them, and to see if they could make any further discoveries, *ver. 3, 4*. Some think, the other disciples were with Peter and John, when the news came; for they *told these things to the eleven*, Luke xxiv. 9. Others think, Mary Magdalene told her story only to Peter and John, and the other women told theirs to the other disciples; yet none of them went to the sepulchre but Peter and John, who were two of the first three of Christ's disciples, often distinguished from the rest by special favours. Note, It is well when those that are more honoured than others with the privileges of disciples, are more active than others in the duty of disciples, more willing to take pains and run hazards in a good work.

1. See here what use we should make of others experiences and observations. When Mary told them what she had seen, they would not in this sense *take her word*, but would go *see with their own eyes*. Do others tell us of the comfort and benefit of ordinances? let us be engaged thereby to make trial of them. Come and see how good it is to draw near to God.

2. See how ready we should be to share with our friends in their cares and fears. Peter and John hasten to the sepulchre, that they might be able to give Mary a satisfactory answer to her jealousies. We should not grudge any pains we take, for the succouring and comforting of the weak and timorous followers of Christ.

3. See what haste we should make in a good work, and when we are going on a good errand. Peter and John consulted neither their ease nor their gravity, but ran to the sepulchre, that they might shew the strength of their zeal and affection, and might lose no time. If we are in the way of God's commandments, we should *run that way*.

4. See what a good thing it is to have good company in a good work. Perhaps neither of these disciples would have ventured to the sepulchre alone, but being both together, they made no difficulty of it. See *Eccles. iv. 9*.

5. See what a laudable emulation it is among disciples, to strive which shall excel, which shall exceed in that which is good. It was no breach of ill manners for John, though the younger, to out-run Peter, and get before him. We must do *our best*, and neither envy those that can *do better*, nor despise those that *do as they can*, though they *come behind*.

1. He that got *first* in this race was the *disciple whom Jesus loved* in a special manner, and who therefore in a special manner loved Jesus. Note, Sense of Christ's love to us, kindling love in us to him again, will make us to *excel in virtue*. The love of Christ will constrain us more than any thing to abound in duty.

2. He that was *cast behind* was Peter, who had denied his Master, and was in sorrow and shame for it, and this clogged him as a weight; sense of guilt cramps us, and hinders our enlargements.

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in the service of God. When conscience is offended, we lose ground.

Fourthly, Peter and John being come to the sepulchre, prosecuted the enquiry, yet improve little in the discovery.

1. John went no further than Mary Magdalene had done.

1. He had the curiosity to look into the sepulchre, and saw it was empty. He *sloped down and looked in*. Those that would find the knowledge of Christ must *slope down and look in*, must with a humble heart veil to the authority of divine revelation; and must *look wisely*.

2. Yet he had not courage to go into the sepulchre. The warmest affections are not always accompanied with the boldest resolutions; many are swift to run religion's race, that are not stout to fight her battles.

2. Peter, though he came last, went in first, and made a more exact discovery than John had, *ver. 6, 7*. Though John out-ran him, he did not therefore turn back, or stand still, but *made after* as fast as he could, and while John was with a deal of caution *looking in*; he came, and with a deal of courage *went into the sepulchre*.

1. Observe here the boldness of Peter, and how God dispenseth his gifts variously, John could out-run Peter, but Peter could out-dare John. It is seldom true of the same persons what David saith poetically of Saul and Jonathan, that they were *swifter than eagles*, and yet *stronger than lions*, 2 Sam. i. 23. Some disciples are quick, and they are useful to quicken them that are slow; others are bold, and they are useful to hearten them that are timorous; *diversity of gifts, but one Spirit*.

Peter's venturing into the sepulchre may teach us, 1. That those who in good earnest seek after Christ, must not frighten themselves with bugbears and foolish fancies; there is a lion in the way, a ghost in the grave. 2. That good Christians need not be afraid of the grave, since Christ has lain in it, for to them there is nothing in it frightful; it is not the pit of destruction, nor the worms in it *never dying worms*. Let us therefore not indulge, but conquer the fear we are apt to conceive upon the sight of a dead body, or being alone among the graves, and since we must be dead and in the grave shortly, let us make death and the grave familiar to us, as our near kindred, *Job xvii. 14*. 3. We must be willing to go through the grave to Christ, that way he went to his glory, and so must we. If we cannot see God's face and live, better die than never see it. See *John xix. 25, &c.*

2. Observe the posture he found things in, in the sepulchre.

1. Christ had left his *grave-clothes* behind him there; what clothes he appeared in to his disciples we are not told, but he never appeared in his grave-clothes as ghosts are supposed to do; no, he laid them aside, 1. Because he rose to *die no more*; death was to have no more dominion over him, *Rom. vi. 9*. Lazarus came out with his grave-clothes on, for he was to us risen again; but Christ rising to an immortal life, came out free from those encumbrances. 2. Because he was going to be clothed with the robes of glory, therefore he lays aside these rags; in the heavenly paradise there will be no more occasion for clothes, than there was in the earthly. The ascending prophet dropt his mantle. 3. When we rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, we must leave our grave-clothes behind us, must *put off* all our corruptions. 4. Christ left those in the grave as it were for our use; if the grave be a bed to the saints, thus he hath sheeted that bed, and made it ready for them; and the napkin by it self is of use for the mourning survivors, to *wipe away their tears*.

2. The grave-clothes were found in very good order, which serves for an evidence, that his body was not *stolen away, while men slept*. Robbers of tombs have been known to take away the clothes, and leave the body; but none ever took away the body, and left the clothes, especially when it was *fine linen, and new*, Mark xv. 46. Any one would rather choose to carry a dead body in its clothes, than naked: Or, if they that were supposed to *have stolen it*, would have left the *grave-clothes* behind, yet it cannot be supposed they should find leisure to *fold up the linen*.

3. See how Peter's boldness encouraged John; now he took heart and ventured in, *ver. 8*. and *he saw and believed*; not barely *believed* what Mary said, that the body was gone; no thanks to him to believe what *he saw*; but he began to *believe that Jesus was risen to life again*, though his faith, as yet, was *weak and wavering*.

1. John followed Peter in venturing. It should seem he durst not have gone into the sepulchre, if Peter had not gone in first. Note, It is good to be emboldened in a good work by the boldness of others. The dread of difficulty and danger will be taken off by observing the resolution and courage of others. Perhaps John's quickness had made Peter run faster, and now Peter's boldness makes John venture further than otherwise either the one or the other would have done; though Peter had lately fallen under the disgrace of being a deserter, and John had been advanced to the honour of a confident. Christ having committed his mother to him, yet John not only associated with Peter, but thought it no disparagement to follow him.

2. Yet it should seem that John got the start of Peter in believing. Peter saw and wondered, *Luke xxiv. 12*. but John saw and believed. A mind disposed to contemplation, may, perhaps, sooner



receive the evidence of divine truth, than a mind disposed to action.

But what was the reason they were so slow of heart to believe? The evangelist tells us, *ver. 9.* as yet they *knew not the scripture*, i. e. they did not consider, and apply, and duly improve what they knew of the scripture, that he must *rise again from the dead*. The Old Testament spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah; they believe him to be the Messiah, he himself had often told them, that according to the scriptures of the Old Testament he should rise again; but they had not a presence of mind sufficient by these to explain the present amusements. Observe here,

1. How unapt the disciples themselves were at first to believe the resurrection of Christ, which confirms the testimony they afterwards gave with so much assurance concerning it; for by their backwardness to believe it, it appears they were not credulous concerning it, nor of those simple ones that believe every word. If they had had any design to advance their own interest by it, they would greedily have caught at the first spark of its evidence, would have raised and supported one another's expectations of it, and have prepared the minds of those that followed them to receive the notices of it; but we find on the contrary, their hopes were frustrated, it was to them as a strange thing, and one of the furthest things in their thoughts. Peter and John were so shy of believing it at first, that nothing less than the most convincing proof the thing was capable of, could bring them to testify it afterwards with so much assurance. Hereby it appears they were not only honest men, who would not deceive others, but cautious men, who would not themselves be imposed upon.

2. What was the *reason* of their *slowness to believe*; because as yet they *knew not the scripture*. This seems to be the evangelist's acknowledgment of his own fault among the rest; he doth not say, for as yet Jesus had not appeared to them, had not shewed them his hands and his side, but as yet he had not *opened their understandings to understand the scriptures*, Luke xxiv. 44, 45. for that is the *most sure word of prophecy*.

4. Peter and John pursued their enquiry no further, but desisted, hovering between faith and unbelief, *ver. 10.* *The disciples went away not much the wiser to their own home, and to their own friends and companions, the rest of the disciples to their own lodgings, for homes they had none at Jerusalem.* They went away,

1. For fear of being taken up upon suspicion of a design to steal away the body, or of being charged with it now it was gone; instead of improving their faith, their care is to secure themselves, shift for their own safety. In difficult, dangerous times, it is hard even for good men to go on in their work with the resolution that becomes them.

2. Because they were at a loss, and knew not what to do next, nor what to make of what they had seen, and therefore not having courage to stay at the grave, they resolve to go home, and wait till God shall *reveal unto them this mystery*; which is an instance of their weakness as yet.

3. It is probable the rest of the disciples were together, and to them they return to make report of what they had discovered, and to consult with them what was to be done; and probably now they appointed their meeting in the evening, when Christ came to them.

It is observable, that before Peter and John came to the sepulchre, an angel had appeared there, rolled away the stone, frightened the guard, and comforted the woman; as soon as they were gone from the sepulchre, Mary Magdalene here sees two angels in the sepulchre, *ver. 12.* and yet Peter and John come to the sepulchre, and go into it, and see none; what shall we make of this? Where were the angels when Peter and John were at the sepulchre, who appeared there before and after? 1. Angels appear and disappear at pleasure, according to the orders and instructions given them. They may be, and are really where they are not visibly, nay, it should seem, may be visible to one, and not to another at the same time, 2 *Kings* vi. 17. *Numb.* xxii. 23. How they make themselves visible, then invisible, and then visible again, it is presumption for us to enquire, but that they do so is plain from this story. 2. This favour was shewed to those who were early and constant in their enquiries after Christ, and was the reward of them that came first and staid last, but denied to them that made a transient visit. 3. The apostles were not to receive their instructions from the angels, but from the Spirit of grace. See *Hib.* ii. 5.

11. ¶ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. 12. And seeing two angels in white, sitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain: 13. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14. And when she had thus said, she turned her self back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? she supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have born him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. 16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned her self, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. 17. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. 18. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples, that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

St. Mark tells us, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, Mark xvi. 9. that appearance is here largely related; and we may observe,

First, The constancy and fervency of Mary Magdalene's affection to the Lord Jesus, *ver. 11.*

1. She *staid at the sepulchre*, when Peter and John were gone, because there her Master *had laid*, and there she was likeliest to hear some tidings of him. Note, 1. Where there is a true love to Christ, there will be a constant adherence to him, and a resolution with purpose of heart to cleave to him. This good woman, though she has lost him, yet rather than seem to desert him, will *abide by his grave* for his sake, and *continue in his love*, even then when she wants the comfort of it. 2. Where there is a true desire of acquaintance with Christ, there will be a constant attendance on the means of knowledge. See *Hib.* vi. 2, 3. *the third day he will raise us up*; and then shall we know the meaning of that resurrection, if we follow on to know, as Mary here.

2. She staid there weeping, and these tears loudly spake her affection to her Master. They that have lost Christ have cause to weep; she wept at the remembrance of his bitter sufferings; wept for his death, and the loss which she and her friends and the country sustained by it; *wept* to think of returning home without him; *wept* because she did not now find his body. They that seek Christ, must *seek him sorrowing*, Luke ii. 48. must weep not for him, but for themselves.

3. *As she wept, she looked into the sepulchre*, that her eye might affect her heart. When we are in search of something we have lost, we look again and again in the place where we last left it and expected to have found it; she will look *yet seven times*, not knowing but that at length she might see some encouragement. Note, 1. Weeping must not hinder seeking. Though she *wept*, she *stayed alone and looked in*. 2. Those are likely to *seek and find*, that seek with affection; that seek *in tears*.

Secondly, The vision she had of two angels in the sepulchre, *ver. 12.* Observe here,

1. The description of the persons she saw. They were *two angels in white, sitting*, probably, on some benches or ledges hewn out in the rock, one at the head, and the other at the feet of the grave. Where we have,

1. Their nature; they were angels, messengers from heaven, sent on purpose on this great occasion, 1. To *bringer the Son*, and to grace the solemnity of his resurrection. Now the *Son of God* was again to be *bringer into the world*, the angels have a charge to attend him, as they did at his birth, *Hib.* i. 6. 2. To *comfort the saints*; to speak good words to them that were in sorrow, and by giving them notice that the Lord was risen to prepare them for the fight of him.

2. Their number; two, not a multitude of the heavenly host to *give praise*, only two to *hear witness*; for out of the mouth of two witnesses this word would be established.

3. Their array. They were *in white*, noting, 1. Their purity and holiness; the best of men *glorifying before the angels*, and compared with them, are *clothed in filthy garments*, *Zech.* iii. 3. but angels are spotless; and glorified spirits, when they come to be as the angels, shall *walk with Christ in white*. 2. Their glory, and glorying upon this occasion. The white in which they appeared, represented the brightness of that state into which Christ was now risen.

4. Their posture and place. They sat as it were reporting themselves in Christ's grave, for angels, though they needed not a restoration, were obliged to Christ for their establishment. These angels went *into the grave*, to reach us not to be afraid of it, nor to think that our resting in it a while, will be any prejudice to our immortality; no, matters are so ordered, that the grave is not much out of our way to heaven. It intimates likewise that angels are to be employed about the saints, not only at their death, to carry their souls into Abraham's bosom, but at the great day, to *raise their souls*, *Mat.* xxiii. 31. These angelick guards (and angels are called watchers, *Deut.* ix. 23.) keeping possession of the sepulchre, when they had frightened away the guards which the enemies had set, represent Christ's victory over the powers of darkness, routing and defeating them. Thus Michael and his angels are more than conquerors. Their sitting so face one another, one at this



his bed's head, the other at the bed's feet, notes their care of the entire body of Christ, his mystical as well as his natural body, from head to foot; it may also mind us of the two cherubims, placed one at either end of the mercy-seat, looking one at another, *Exod. xxv. 18*. Christ crucified was the great propitiatory, at the head and feet of which were these *two cherubims*, not with flaming swords to keep us from, but welcome messengers to direct us to the way of life.

2. Their compassionate enquiry into the cause of Mary Magdalene's grief, *ver. 13*. *Woman, why weepest thou?* This question was, 1. A rebuke to her weeping; *why weepest thou*, when thou hast cause to rejoice? Many of the floods of our tears would dry away before such a search as this into the fountain of them. *Why art thou cast down?* 2. It was designed to shew how much angels are concerned at the griefs of the saints, having a charge to minister to them for their comfort. Christians should thus sympathize with one another. 3. It was only to make an occasion of informing her of that which would turn her mourning into rejoicing, would put off her sackcloth, and gird her with gladness.

3. The melancholy account she gives them of her present distress. *Because they have taken away the blessed body I came to embalm, and I know not where they have laid it.* The same story she had told, *ver. 2*. In it we may see,

1. The weakness of her faith. If she had had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, this mountain would have been removed; but we oft perplex ourselves, needlessly with imaginary difficulties, which faith would discover to us as real advantages. Many good people complain of the clouds and darkness they are under, which are the necessary methods of grace for the humbling of their souls, the mortifying of their sins, and the endearing of Christ to them.

2. The strength of his love. They that have a true affection for Christ, cannot but be in great affliction, when they have lost either the comfortable tokens of his love in their souls, or the comfortable opportunities of conversing with him, and doing him honour, in his ordinances. Mary Magdalene is not diverted from her enquiries by the surprize of the vision, nor satisfied with the honour of it; but still she harps upon the same string; *They have taken away my Lord. A fight of angels, and their smiles, will not suffice without a fight of Christ, and God's smiles in him.* Nay, the fight of angels is but an opportunity of pursuing her enquiries after Christ. All creatures, the most excellent, the most dear, should be used as means, and but as means to bring us into acquaintance with God in Christ. The angels asked her, *Why weepest thou?* Why, faith she, I have cause enough to weep, for *they have taken away my Lord, and like Jacob, what have I more?* Do you ask, *why I weep?* *My beloved has withdrawn himself, and is gone.* Note, None knows, but they that have experienced, the sorrows of a deserted soul, that has had comfortable evidences of the love of God in Christ and hopes of heaven, but has now lost them, and walks in darkness; such a wounded spirit, who can bear?

Thirdly, Christ's appearing to her, while she was talking with the angels, and telling them her case, before they had given her any answer. Christ steps in himself to satisfy her enquiries, for God now speaketh to us *by his Son*; none but he himself can direct us to himself. Mary would fain know where her Lord is, and behold, he is at her right hand. Note, 1. Those that will be content with nothing short of a sight of Christ, shall be put off with nothing less. He never said to the soul that sought him, *seek in vain*. Is it Christ thou wouldst have? Christ thou shalt have. 2. Christ in manifesting himself to those that seek him, often outdoes their expectations. Mary longs to see the dead body of Christ, and complains of the loss of that, and behold, *she sees him alive*. Thus he doth for his praying people more than they are able to ask or think.

In this appearance of Christ to Mary. Observe,

1. How he did at first reveal himself to her.

(1.) He stood as a common person, and she looked upon him accordingly, *ver. 14*. She stood expecting an answer to her complaint from the angels; and either seeing the shadow, or hearing the tread of some person behind her, she turned her self back, from talking with the angels, and *saw Jesus himself standing*, the very person she was looking for, and yet she knew not that it was Jesus. Note, 1. The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, *Psal. cxlvi. 1*. nearer than they are aware. They that seek Christ, though they do not see him, yet may be sure he is not far from them. 2. Those that diligently seek the Lord will turn every corner in their enquiry after him. Mary turned her self back in hopes of some discovery. Several of the ancients suggest, that Mary was directed to look behind her by the angels rising up, and doing him obsequence to the Lord Jesus, whom they saw before Mary did; and that she looked back to see who it was they paid such a profound reverence to. But if so, it is not likely she would have taken him for the gardener; rather therefore it was her earnest desire in seeking that made her turn every way. 3. Christ is often near his people, and they are not aware of him. She knew not that it was Jesus; nor that he appeared in any other likeness, but either it was a careless transient look she cast upon him, and her eyes being full

of care, she could not so well distinguish, or they were hindered that she should not know him, as those of the two disciples, *Luke xxiv. 16*.

(2.) He asked her a common question, and she answered him accordingly, *ver. 15*.

1. The question he asked her was natural enough, and what any one would have asked her; *Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?* What business hast thou here in the garden so early? And what is all this noise and ado for? Perhaps, it was spoken with some roughness, as Joseph spake to his brethren when he made himself strange, before he made himself known to them. It should seem, this was the first word Christ spoke after his resurrection; *Why weepest thou?* I am risen. The resurrection of Christ has enough in it to allay all our sorrows, to check the streams, and dry up the fountains of our tears. Observe here, Christ takes cognizance, 1. Of his peoples griefs, and enquires, *Why they weep*: He bottles their tears, and records them in his book. 2. Of his peoples cares, and enquires, *Whom they seek*, and what they would have: When he knows they are seeking him, yet he will know it from them; they must tell him *whom they seek*.

2. The reply she made him is natural enough; she doth not give him a direct answer, but, as if she should say, Why do you banter me, and upbraid me with my tears? you know *why I weep*, and *whom I seek*; and therefore, supposing him to be the gardener, the person employed by Joseph to dress and keep his garden, who, she thought, was come thither thus early to his work, she said, *Sir, if thou hast carried him home, pray tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.* See here,

(1.) The error of her understanding; she supposed our Lord Jesus to be the gardener, perhaps, because he asked, what authority she had to do there. Note, Troubled spirits, in a cloudy and dark day, are apt to misrepresent Christ to themselves, and to put wrong constructions upon the methods of his providence and grace.

(2.) The truth of her affection. See how her heart was upon it to find Christ! She puts the question to every one she meets, like the careful spouse, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* She speaks a gardener fair, and calls him Sir, in hopes to gain some intelligence from him concerning her beloved. When she speaks of Christ, she doth not name him; but, *if thou have borne him hence*, taking it for granted that this gardener was full of thoughts concerning this Jesus as well as she, and therefore could not but know whom she meant. Another evidence of the strength of her affection was, that wherever he was laid she would undertake to remove him: Such a body, with such a weight of spices about it, was much more than she could pretend to carry; but true love thinks it can do more than it can, and makes nothing of difficulties. She supposed this gardener grudged that the body of one that was ignominiously crucified should have the honour to be laid in his master's new tomb, and that therefore he had removed it to some furtive place, which he thought fitter for it. Yet Mary doth not threaten him to go tell his master, and get him turned out of his place for it; but undertakes to find out some other sepulchre; to which he might be welcome: Christ needs not to stay where he is thought a burthen.

2. How Christ, at length, made himself known to her, and, by a pleasing surprize, gave her infallible assurances of his resurrection. Joseph, at length, said to his brethren, *I am Joseph*: So Christ here to Mary Magdalene, now he is entered upon his exalted state.

Observe, (1.) How Christ discovered himself to this good woman that was seeking him in tears, *ver. 16*. *Jesus saith unto her, Mary.* It was said with an emphasis, and that air of kindness and freedom with which he was wont to speak to her. Now he changed his voice, and spoke like himself, not like the gardener. Christ's way of making himself known to his people is by his word, his word applied to their souls, speaking to them in particular. When those, whom God loveth by name in the council of his love, (*Zeal. xxviii. 12*.) he call by name in the efficacy of his grace, then he reveals his Son in them, as in *Paul, Gal. i. 16*. when Christ called to him by name, *Saul, Saul*. Christ's sheep know his voice, *John x. 4*. This one word *Mary*, was like that to the disciples in the storm, *It is I*. That the word of Christ doth us good, when we put our own names into the precepts and promises: In this Christ calls to me, and speaks to me.

(2.) How readily she received this discovery when Christ said, *Mary*, dost thou not know me? Art thou and I grown such strangers? She was presently aware who it was, as the spouse, *Cant. ii. 8*. *It is the voice of my beloved*: She turned herself and said, *Rabboni, my master*. It might properly be read with an interrogation, *Rabboni?* Is it my master? Nay, but is it indeed? Observe,

1. The title of respect she gives him: *My master, rabboni*, a teaching master. The Jews called their doctors *Rabbis*, great men. Their crickets tell us, that *Rabbi* was with them a more honourable title than *Rabbi*; and therefore Mary chooseth that, and adds a note of appropriation, *my great master*. Note, Notwithstanding the freedom of communion Christ is pleased to admit



us to with himself, we must remember that he is our *Master*, and to be approached with a *godly fear*.

2. With what liveliness of affection she gives this title to Christ: *She turned her self* from the angels whom she had in her eye, to look unto Jesus. We must take off our regards from all creatures, even the brightest and best, to fix them upon Christ, from whom nothing must divert us, and with whom nothing must interfere. When *she thought it had been the gardener*, she looked another way when she spoke to him; but now *she knew the voice of Christ*, she turned her self. The soul that hears Christ's voice, and is turned to him, calls him, with joy and triumph, *my master*. See with what pleasure those who love Christ speak of his authority over them! *My Master, my great Master*.

(3.) The further instructions that Christ gave her, *ver. 17. Touch me not, but go carry the news to the disciples*.

1. He diverts her from the expectation of familiar society and conversation with him at this time: *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended*. Mary was so transported with the sight of her dear Master, that she forgot her self, and that state of glory into which he was now entering, and was ready to express her joy by affectionate embraces of him, which Christ here forbids at this time.

(1.) *Touch me not thus at all, for I am to ascend to heaven*. He bid the disciples touch him, for the confirmation of their faith; he allowed the women to take hold of his feet, and worship him, Matt. xxviii. 9. but Mary supposing that he was risen, as Lazarus was, to live among them constantly, and converse with them freely, as he had done, upon that presumption, was about to take hold of his hand with her usual freedom; this mistake Christ rectified, she must believe him and adore him as exalted, but must not expect to be familiar with him as formerly: See 2 Cor. v. 16. He forbids her to dote upon his bodily presence, to set her heart on that, or expect the continuance of that, and leads her to that spiritual converse and communion, which she should have with him, after he was ascended to his Father; for the greatest joy of his resurrection was, that it was a step towards his ascension. Mary thought, now her Master was risen, he would presently set up a temporal kingdom, such as they had long promised themselves: No, saith Christ, *Touch me not*, with any such thought; think not to lay hold on me, so as to detain me here; for though *I am not yet ascended*, go to my brethren, and tell them, *I am to ascend*. As before his death, so now after his resurrection, he still harps upon this, that he was going away, was *no more in the world*; and therefore they must look higher than his bodily presence, and look further than the present state of things.

(2.) *Touch me not*, i. e. do not stay to touch me now, stay not now to make any further enquiries, or give any further expressions of joy, for *I am not yet ascended*, I shall not presently depart, it may as well be done another time, the best service thou canst do now, is to carry the tidings to the disciples; lose no time therefore, but go away with all speed. Note, Publick service ought to be preferred before private satisfaction: *It is more blessed to give, than to receive*. Jacob must let an angel go when the day breaks, and it is time for him to look after his family. Mary must not stay to talk with her Master, but must carry his message; for it was a day of good tidings, which she must not engross the comfort of, but hand it to others. See that story, 2 Kings vii. 9.

2. He directs her what message to carry to his disciples: *But go to my brethren, and tell them*, not only that I am risen, she could have told them that of her self, for she had seen him, but that *I ascend*. Observe,

(1.) To whom this message is sent: *Go to my brethren* with it, for he is not ashamed to call them so. 1. Though he was now entering upon his glory, and was declared to be the Son of God with greater power than ever, yet he owns his disciples as his brethren, and expresseth himself with more tender affection to them than before; he had called them friends, but never brethren till now: Though Christ be high, yet he is not haughty: Notwithstanding his elevation, he disdains not to own his poor relations. 2. Though his disciples had lately carried themselves very disingenuously towards him, he had never seen them together since they all forsook him and fled, when he was apprehended; justly might he now have sent them an angry message; Go to yonder treacherous deserters, and tell them, I will never trust them more, or have any thing more to do with them; No, he forgiveth, he forgets, and doth not upbraid.

(2.) By whom it is sent; by Mary Magdalene, out of whom had been cast seven devils, yet now thus favoured: This was her reward for her constancy in adhering to Christ, and enquiring after him; and a tacit rebuke to the apostles, who had not been so close as she was in attending on the dying Jesus, nor so early as she was in meeting the rising Jesus; she becomes an apostle to the apostles.

(3.) What the message itself is; *I ascend to my Father*. Two full breasts of consolation here are in these words:

1. Our joint relation to God, resulting from our union with Christ, is an unspeakable comfort: Speaking of that inexhaustible spring of light, life, and bliss, he saith, *He is my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God*. This is very expressive of that near relation that is between Christ and believers; he that

sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are both one; for they agree in one, Heb. ii. 11. Here is such an advancement of Christians, and such a condescension of Christ, as brings them very near together: So admirably well is the matter contrived, in order to their union!

(1.) It is the great dignity of believers, that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is, in him, their Father. A vast difference indeed there is between the respective foundations of the relation; he is Christ's Father by eternal generation, ours by a gracious adoption; yet even that warrants us to call him, as Christ did, *Abba, Father*. This gives a reason why Christ called them brethren, because his Father was their Father. Christ was now ascending to appear as an advocate with the Father, with his Father; and therefore we may hope he will prevail for any thing with our Father, and therefore we may hope he will prevail for us.

(2.) It is the great condescension of Christ, that he is pleased to own the believer's God for his God; *my God, and your God*; mine, that he may be yours; the God of the Redeemer to support him, Psalm lxxxix. 26. that he might be the God of the redeemed to save them. The summary of the new covenant is, that God will be to us a God; and therefore Christ being the surety and head of the covenant, who is primarily dealt with, and believers only through him as his spiritual seed, this covenant relation fastens first upon him, God becomes his God, and so ours; we partaking of a divine nature, Christ's Father is our Father; and he partaking of the human nature, our God is his God.

2. Christ's ascension into heaven, in further prosecution of his undertaking for us, is likewise an unspeakable comfort; tell them I must shortly ascend; that is the next step I am to take. Now this was intended to be,

(1.) A word of caution to these disciples not to expect the continuance of his bodily presence on earth, nor the setting up of his temporal kingdom among men, which they dreamt of: No, tell them I am not risen to stay with them, but to go on their errand to heaven. Thus they who are raised to a spiritual life, in conformity to Christ's resurrection, must reckon that they rise to ascend; they are quickened with Christ, that they may sit with him in heavenly places, Eph. ii. 5, 6. Let them not think that this earth is to be their home and rest; no, being born from heaven, they are bound for heaven; their eye and aim must be upon another world, and this ever upon their hearts, *I ascend*; therefore must I seek things above.

(2.) A word of comfort to them, and to all that shall believe in him through their word; he was then ascending, he is now ascended to his Father, and our Father: This was his advancement, he ascended to receive those honours and powers, which were to be the recompence of his humiliation; he saith it with triumph, that they who love him may rejoice. This is our advantage; for he ascended as a conqueror leading captivity captive for us, Psalm lxviii. 18. he ascended as our forerunner, to prepare a place for us, and to be ready to receive us. This message was like that which Joseph's brethren brought to Jacob concerning him, Gen. xlv. 26. *Joseph is yet alive*, and not only so, *vivit imo & in senatum venit*, he is governor over all the land of Egypt; all power is his.

Some make these words, *I ascend to my God, and your God*, to include a promise of our resurrection in the virtue of Christ's resurrection; for Christ had proved the resurrection of the dead from these words, *I am the God of Abraham*, Matt. xxii. 32. So that Christ here insinuates, as he is my God, and hath therefore raised me, so he is your God, and will therefore raise you, and be your God, Rev. xxi. 3. *Because I live, you shall live also*: I now ascend to honour my God, and you shall ascend to him as your God.

Lastly, Here is Mary Magdalene's faithful report of what she had seen and heard to the disciples, *ver. 18. She came and told the disciples*, whom she found together, that she had seen the Lord. Peter and John had left her seeking him carefully with tears, and would not stay to seek him with her; and now she comes to tell them, that she had found him, and to rectify the mistake she had led them into, by enquiring after the dead body, for now she found it was a living body, and a glorified one; so that she found what she sought, and, what was infinitely better, she had joy in her sight of the Master her self, and was willing to communicate of her joy, for she knew it would be good news to them. When God comforts us, it is with this design, that we may comfort others.

And as she told them what she had seen, so also what she had heard; she had seen the Lord alive by the same token, and a good token it was, that he had spoken these things unto her, as a message to be delivered to them, and she delivered it faithfully. They that are acquainted with the word of Christ themselves, should communicate their knowledge for the good of others, and not grudge that others should know as much as they do.

19. ¶ Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them



them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. 21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the holy Ghost. 23. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. 24. ¶ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

The infallible proofs of Christ's resurrection were his shewing himself alive, Acts i. 3. In these verses we have an account of his first appearance to the college of the disciples on the same day he rose. He had sent them the tidings of his resurrection by trusty and credible messengers, but, to shew his love to them, and confirm their faith in him, he came himself, and gave them all the assurances they could desire of the truth of it, that they might not have it by hearsay only, and at second hand, but might themselves be eye-witnesses of his being alive, because they must attest it to the world, and build the church upon that testimony. Now observe here,

First, When and where this appearance was, ver. 19. It was the same day that he rose, being the first day of the week, the day after the Jewish sabbath, at a private meeting of the disciples, ten of them, and some more of their friends with them, Luke xxiv. 33.

There are three secondary ordinances (as I may call them) instituted by our Lord Jesus, to continue in his church for the support of it, and for the due administration of the principal ordinances, the word, sacraments, and prayer; these are, the Lord's day, solemn assemblies, and a standing ministry; the mind of Christ concerning each of these is plainly intimated to us in these verses, and of the two first here in the circumstances of this appearance, the other ver. 21. Christ's kingdom was to be set up among men, immediately upon his resurrection; and accordingly we find the very day he rose, though but a day of small things, yet graced with those solemnities, which should help to keep up a face of religion, throughout all the ages of the church.

1. Here is a Christian sabbath observed by the disciples, and owned by our Lord Jesus. The visit Christ made to his disciples, was on the first day of the week. And the first day of the week is (I think) the only day of the week, or month, or year, that is ever mentioned by number in all the New Testament; and that is several times spoken of as a day religiously observed. Though it was said here expressly, ver. 1. that Christ rose the first day of the week, and it might have been sufficient to say here, ver. 19. he appeared the same day at evening; yet, to put an honour upon the day, it is repeated, being the first day of the week; not that the apostles designed to put honour upon the day, they were yet in doubt concerning the occasion of it, but God designed to put honour upon it, by ordering it that they should be altogether to receive Christ's first visit on that day. Thus, in effect, he blessed and sanctified that day, because in it the Redeemer rested.

2. Here is a Christian assembly solemnized by the disciples, and that also owned by the Lord Jesus. Probably, the disciples met here for some religious exercise, to pray together; or, perhaps, they met to compare notes, and consider whether they had sufficient evidence of their Master's resurrection, and to consult what was now to be done; whether they should keep together or scatter: They met to know one another's minds, strengthen one another's hands, and concert proper measures to be taken in the present critical juncture.

This meeting was private, because they durst not appear publicly, especially not in a body, they met in a house, but they kept the doors shut, that they might not be seen together, and that none might come among them, but such as they knew, for they feared the Jews, who would prosecute the disciples as criminals, that they might seem to believe the lye they would deceive the world with, that they came by night and stole him away. Note, 1. The disciples of Christ, even in difficult times, must not forsake the assembling themselves together, Heb. x. 25. Those sheep of the flock were scattered in the storm, but sheep are sociable, and will come together again. It is no new thing for the assemblies of Christ's disciples to be driven into corners, and forced into the wilderness, Rev. xii. 14. Prov. xxviii. 12. God's people have been often obliged to enter into their chambers, and shut their doors, as here, for fear of the Jews. Persecution is allotted them, and retirement from persecution is allowed them, and then where shall we look for them, but in dens and caves of the earth? It is a real grief, but no real reproach to Christ's disciples, thus to abscond.

Secondly, What was said and done in this visit Christ made to his disciples, and this interview between them,

1. When they were assembled, Jesus came among them in his own likeness, yet drawing a veil over the brightness of his body, now begun to be glorified, else it would have dazzled their eyes as in his transfiguration. Christ came among them, to give them a specimen of the performance of his promise, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them.

2. He came, though the doors were shut. This doth not at all weaken the evidence of his having a real human body after his resurrection; though the doors were shut, he knew how to open them without any noise, and come in so as that they might not hear him, as formerly he had walked on the water, and yet had a true body. It is a comfort to Christ's disciples, when their solemn assemblies are reduced to privacy, that no doors can shut out Christ's presence from them.

We have five things in this appearance of Christ:

(1.) His kind and familiar salutation of his disciples: He said, Peace be unto you. This was not a word of course, though commonly used so, at the meeting of friends, but a solemn, uncommon benediction, conferring upon them all the blessed fruits and effects of his death and resurrection. The phrase was vulgar, but the sense was now peculiar, Peace be unto you, is as much as all good be to you, all peace always by all means. Christ had left them his peace for their legacy, chap. xiv. 27. by the death of the testator the testament was become of force, and he was now risen from the dead to prove the will, and to be himself the executor of it; accordingly he here makes prompt payment of the legacy; Peace be unto you: His speaking peace makes peace, creates the fruit of the lips peace; peace with God, peace in your own consciences, peace with one another: All this peace be with you; not peace with the world, but peace in Christ. His sudden appearing in the midst of them, when they were full of doubts concerning him, full of fears concerning themselves, could not but put them into some disorder and consternation, the noise of which waves he stills with this word, Peace be unto you.

(2.) His clear and undeniable manifestation of himself to them, ver. 20. And here observe,

1. The method he took to convince them of the truth of his resurrection: They now saw him alive, whom multitudes had seen dead two or three days before: Now the only doubt was, whether this that they saw alive, was the same individual body which had been seen dead; and none could desire a further proof that it was so, than the scars or marks of the wounds in the body: Now,

(1.) The marks of the wounds, and very deep marks, that, without any pain or soreness, remained in the body of the Lord Jesus even after his resurrection, that they might be demonstrations of the truth of it. Conquerors glory in the marks of their wounds; Christ's wounds were to speak on earth, that it was he himself; and therefore he rose with them; they were to speak in heaven in the intercession he must ever live to make, and therefore he ascended with them, and appeared in the midst of the throne a Lamb as it had been slain, and bleeding afresh, Rev. v. 6. Nay, it should seem, he will come again with his scars, that they may look on him whom they pierced.

(2.) These marks he shewed to his disciples for their conviction: They had not only the satisfaction of seeing him look with the same countenance, and hearing him speak with the same voice they had been so long accustomed to, sic oculos, sic ille manus, sic ora ferebat, but the further evidence of these peculiar marks; he opened his hands to them, that they might see the marks of the wounds on them; he opened his breast, as the nurse hers to the child, to shew them the wound there. Note, The exalted Redeemer will ever shew himself open handed, and open hearted, to all his faithful friends and followers. When Christ manifests his love to believers by the comforts of his Spirit, assures them, that because he lives, they shall live also, then he shews them his hands and his side.

2. The impression it made upon them, and the good it did them.

(1.) They were convinced that they saw the Lord, so was their faith confirmed: At first they thought they saw an apparition only, a phantasm, but now they knew it was the Lord himself. Thus many true believers, who, while they were weak, feared their comforts were but imaginary, afterwards find them, through grace, real and substantial. They ask not, Is it the Lord? but are assured, it is he.

(2.) Then they were glad; that which strengthened their faith, raised their joy, believing, they rejoice. The evangelist seems to write it with something of transport and triumph: Then! then! were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. If it revived the spirit of Jacob, to hear that Joseph is yet alive; how would it revive the hearts of those disciples, to hear that Jesus is again alive? It is life from the dead to them. Now that word of Christ was fulfilled, John xvi. 22. I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice. This wiped away all tears from their eyes. Note, A sight of Christ will glad the heart of a disciple at any time; the more we see of Christ, the more we shall rejoice in him; and our joy will never be perfect, till we come there where we shall see him as he is.



(3.) The honourable and ample commission he gave them to be his agents in the planting of his church, *ver. 21.* Here is,

1. The preface to their commission, which was the solemn repetition of the salutation before, *Peace be unto you.* This was intended, either, 1. To raise their attention to the commission he was about to give them; the former salutation was to still the tumult of their fear, that they might calmly attend to the proofs of his resurrection; this was to reduce the transport of their joy, that they might sedately hear what he had further to say to them; or, 2. To encourage them to accept of the commission he was giving them: Though it would involve them in a great deal of trouble, yet he designed their honour and comfort in it, and, in the issue, it would be *peace to them.* Gideon received his commission with this word, *Peace be unto thee,* Judg. vi. 22, 23. *Christ is our peace; if he be with us, peace is to us.* Christ was now sending the disciples to publish peace to the world, Isa. lii. 7. and Christ here not only confers it upon them for their own satisfaction, but commits it to them as a trust to be by them transmitted to all the sons of peace, Luke x. 5, 6.

2. The commission itself, which sounds very great; *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

(1.) It is easy to understand how Christ sent them; he appointed them to go on with his work upon earth, and to lay out themselves for the spreading of his gospel, and the setting up of his kingdom among men: He sent them, authorized with a divine warrant, armed with a divine power; sent them as ambassadors to treat of peace, and as heralds to proclaim it; sent them as servants to bid to the marriage. Hence they are called *apostles*, men sent.

(2.) But how Christ sent them, as the Father sent him, is not so easily understood; certainly their commissions and powers were infinitely inferior to his; but,

1. Their work was of the same kind with his, and they were to go on where he left off: They were not sent to be priests and kings, like him, but only prophets. As he was sent to bear witness to the truth, so were they; not to be mediators of the reconciliation, but only preachers and publishers of it. Was he sent, not to be ministered to, but to minister; not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him; not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fill them up? So were they. As the Father sent him to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, so he sent them into all the world.

2. He had a power to send them, equal to that which the Father had to send him: Here the force of the comparison seems to lie: By the same authority that the Father sent me, do I send you. This proves the Godhead of Christ; the commissions he gave, were of equal authority with those which the Father gave, and as valid and effectual to all intents and purposes; equal with those he gave to the Old Testament prophets in visions. The commissions of Peter and John by the plain word of Christ, are as good as those of Isaiah and Ezekiel by the Lord sitting on his throne; nay, equal with that which was given to the Mediator himself for his work. Had he an uncontested authority, and an irresistible ability for his work, so had they for theirs. Or thus, *As the Father hath sent me,* is as it were the recital of his power, by virtue of the authority given him as mediator, he gave authority to them, as his ministers, to act for him, and in his name, with the children of men; so that they who received them, or rejected them, received or rejected him, and him that sent him. John xiii. 20.

(4.) The qualification of them for the discharge of the trust reposed in them by their commission, *ver. 22.* He breathed on them, and said, *Receive ye the holy Ghost.* Observe,

1. The sign he used to assure them of, and affect them with this gift he was now about to bestow upon them; he breathed on them; not only to shew them by this breath of life that he himself was really alive, but to signify to them that spiritual life and power which they should receive from him for all the services that lay before them. Probably, he breathed upon them all together, not upon each severally; and though Thomas was not with them, yet the Spirit of the Lord knew where to find him, as he did Eldad and Medad, Numb. xi. 26. Christ here seems to refer to the creation of man at first, by the breathing of the breath of life into him, Gen. ii. 7. and to intimate, that he himself was the author of that work, and that the spiritual life and strength of ministers and Christians is derived from him, and depends upon him, as much as the natural life of Adam and his seed. As the breath of the Almighty gave life to man, and began the old world; so the breath of the mighty Saviour gave life to his ministers, and began a new world, Job xxxiii. 4. Now this intimates to us, 1. That the Spirit is the breath of Christ, proceeding from the Son. The Spirit, in the Old Testament, is compared to breath, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. Come, O breath; but the New Testament tells us, it is Christ's breath. The breath of God is put for the power of his wrath, Isa. xi. 4. xxx. 33. but the breath of Christ signifies the power of his grace; the breathing of threatnings is changed into the breathings of love by the mediation of Christ. Our words are uttered by our breath, so the word of Christ is spirit and life: The word comes from the Spirit, and the Spirit comes along with the word. 2. That the Spirit is the gift of Christ. The apostles communicated the

holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, those hands being first lifted up in prayer, for they could only beg this blessing, and carry it as messengers; but Christ conferred the holy Ghost by breathing, for he is the author of the gift, and from him it comes originally. Moses could not give his Spirit, God did it, Num. xi. 17. but Christ did it himself.

2. The solemn grant he made, signified by this sign, *receive ye the holy Ghost,* in part now, as an earnest of what you shall further receive not many days hence. They now received more of the holy Ghost than they had yet received. Thus spiritual blessings are given gradually; to him that has shall be given. Now Jesus began to be glorified, more of the Spirit began to be given; see John vii. 39. Let us see what is contained in this grant.

1. Christ hereby gives them assurance of the Spirit's aid in their future work; in the execution of the commission now given them. I send you, and you shall have the Spirit to go along with you. Now the Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, to qualify them for all the services that lay before them: Whom Christ employs he will clothe with his Spirit, and furnish with all needful powers.

2. He hereby gives them experience of the Spirit's influences in their present case. He had shewed them his hands and his side, to convince them of the truth of his resurrection; but the plainest evidences will not of themselves work faith, witness the infidelity of the soldiers, who were the only eye-witnesses of the resurrection. Therefore receive ye the holy Ghost to work faith in you, and to open your understandings. They were now in danger of the Jews, therefore receive ye the holy Ghost to work courage in you: What Christ said to them, he saith to all true believers, receive ye the holy Ghost, Eph. i. 13. What Christ gives we must receive; must submit ourselves and our whole souls to the quickening, sanctifying influences of the blessed Spirit; receive his motions and comply with them; receive his powers, and make use of them; and they who thus obey this word as a precept, shall have the benefit of it as a promise, they shall receive the holy Ghost as the guide of their way, and the earnest of their inheritance.

(5.) One particular branch of the power given them by their commission, instanced in, *ver. 23.* Whose soever sins ye remit in the due execution of the powers you are entrusted with, they are remitted to them, and they may take the comfort of it. And whose soever sins ye retain, i. e. pronounce unpardoned, and the guilt of them bound on, they are retained, and the sinner may be sure of it to his sorrow. Now this follows upon their receiving the holy Ghost, for if they had not an extraordinary spirit of discerning, they had not been fit to be intrusted with such an authority; for in the strictest sense, this is a special commission to the apostles themselves, and the first preachers of the gospel, who could distinguish who were in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and who were not. By virtue of this power Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira dead, and Paul struck Elymas blind. Yet it must be understood as a general charter to the church and her ministers, not securing an infallibility of judgment to any man, or company of men in the world, but encouraging the faithful stewards of the mysteries of God to stand to the gospel they were sent to preach, for God himself would stand to it. The apostles in preaching remission must begin at Jerusalem, though she had lately brought upon her self the guilt of Christ's blood, yet you may declare their sins remitted upon gospel terms. And Peter did so, Acts ii. 38. iii. 19. Christ being risen for our justification, sends his gospel heralds to proclaim the jubilee begun, the act of indemnity now passed; and by this rule men shall be judged, John xii. 48. Rom. ii. 16. Jam. ii. 12. God will never alter this rule of judgment, nor vary from it; whom the gospel acquits shall be acquitted, and whom that condemns shall be condemned; which puts a mighty honour upon the ministry, and should put a mighty courage into ministers.

Two ways the apostles and ministers of Christ remit and retain sin, and both as having authority. 1. By a sound doctrine. They are commissioned to tell the world, that salvation is to be had upon gospel terms, and no other, and they shall find God will say amen to it, so shall their doom be. 2. By a strict discipline, applying the general rule of the gospel to particular persons. Whom you admit into communion with you, according to the rules of the gospel, God will admit into communion with himself; and whom you cast out of communion as impenitent and obstinate in scandalous and infectious sins, shall be bound over to the righteous judgment of God.

Thirdly, The incredulity of Thomas, when the report of this was made to him, which introduced Christ's second appearance.

1. Here is Thomas's absence from this meeting, *ver. 24.* He is said to be one of the twelve, one of the college of the apostles, who, though now eleven, had been twelve, and were to be so again. They were but eleven, and one of them was missing; Christ's disciples will never be all together till the general assembly at the great day. Perhaps it was Thomas's unhappiness that he was absent; either he was not well, or had not notice; or perhaps it was his sin and folly; either he was diverted by business or company which he preferred before this opportunity; or he durst not come for fear of the Jews; and he called that his prudence and caution which was his cowardice. However, by this absence he missed the satisfaction



faction of seeing his Master risen, and of sharing with the disciples in their joy upon that occasion. Note, Those know not what they lose, who carelessly absent themselves from the stated solemn assemblies of Christians.

2. The account which the other disciples gave him of the visit their Master had made them, *ver. 25.* next time they saw him, they said unto him with joy enough, *We have seen the Lord*; and no doubt they related to him all that had passed, particularly the satisfaction he had given them, by *shewing them his hands and his side.* It seems, though Thomas was then from them, he was not long from them; absenters for a time must not be condemned as apostates for ever: Thomas is not Judas.

Observe with what an exultation and triumph they speak it, *We have seen the Lord*, the most comfortable sight we ever saw. This they said to Thomas, 1. To upbraid him with his absence. *We have seen the Lord*, but thou hast not. Or rather, 2. To inform him. *We have seen the Lord*, and we wish thou hadst been here to see him too, for thou wouldst have seen enough to satisfy thee. Note, The disciples of Christ should endeavour to build up one another in their most holy faith, both by repeating what they have heard, to those that were absent, that they may hear it at second hand; as also by communicating what they have experienced. They that by faith have seen the Lord, and tasted that he is gracious, should tell others what God has done for their souls; only let boasting be excluded.

3. The objections Thomas raised against the evidence to justify himself, in his lothness to admit it. Tell me not that you have seen the Lord alive, you are too credulous, somebody has made fools of you; for my part, *except I shall*, not only see in his hand the print of the nails, but put my finger into it, and thrust my hand into the wound in his side, I am resolved I will not believe. Some by comparing this with what he said, *John xi. 16. xiv. 5.* conjecture him to be a man of a rough, morose temper, apt to speak peevishly; for all good people are not alike happy in their temper; however, there was certainly much amiss in this here.

1. He had either not heeded, or not duly regarded what Christ had so often said, and that too according to the Old Testament, that he would rise again the third day; so that he ought to have said, *he is risen*, though he had not seen him, nor spoke with any that had.

2. He did not pay a just deference to the testimony of his fellow-disciples, who were men of wisdom and integrity, and ought to be credited. He knew them to be honest men; they all ten of them concurred in the testimony with great assurance, and yet he cannot persuade himself to say that *their record is true.* Christ had chosen them to be his witnesses of this very thing to all nations, and yet Thomas, one of their own fraternity, will not allow them to be competent witnesses, nor trust them farther than he can see them. But it was not their veracity that he questioned, but their prudence; he feared they were too credulous.

3. He tempted Christ, and limited the holy One of Israel, when he would be convinced by his own method, or not at all. He could not be sure that the print of the nails which the apostles told him they had seen, would admit the putting of his finger into them, or the wound in his side the thrusting in of his hand; nor was it fit to deal so roughly with a living body; yet Thomas ties up his faith to this evidence; either he will be humoured, and have his fancy gratified, or he will not believe; see *Mat. xvi. 1.—xxvii. 42.*

4. The open avowing of this in the presence of the disciples, was an offence and discouragement to them. It was not only a sin but a scandal. As one coward makes many, so doth one unbeliever, one sceptick, making his brethrens heart to faint like his heart, *Deut. xx. 9.* Had he only thought this evil, and then laid his hand upon his mouth to suppress it, his error had remained with himself, but his proclaiming his infidelity, and that so peremptorily, might be of ill-consequence to the rest, who were as yet but weak and wavering.

26. ¶ And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. 29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. 30. ¶ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

We have here an account of another appearance of Christ to his disciples after his resurrection, when Thomas was now with them. And concerning this we may observe,

First, When it was that Christ repeated his visit to his disciples, *after eight days*; that day seven-night after he rose, which must therefore be, as that was, *the first day of the week.*

1. He deferred his next appearance for some time, to shew his disciples that he was not risen to such a life as he had formerly lived, to converse constantly with them, but was as one that belonged to another world, and visited this, only as angels do, now and then, when there was occasion. Where Christ was during these eight days, and the rest of the time of his abode on earth, is folly to enquire, and presumption to determine. Where ever he was, no doubt angels ministered unto him. In the beginning of his ministry he had been forty days unseen, tempted by the evil spirit, *Mat. iv. 1, 2.* And now in the beginning of his glory he was forty days, for the most part unseen, attended by good spirits.

2. He deferred it so long as seven days. And why so?

1. That he might put a rebuke upon Thomas for his incredulity, he had neglected the former meeting of the disciples; and to teach him to prize those seasons of grace better for the future, he cannot have such another opportunity of several days. He that slips one tide, must stay a good while for another. A very melancholy week we have reason to think Thomas had of it, drooping, and in suspense, while the other disciples were full of joy; and it was long of himself, and his own folly.

2. That he might try the faith and patience of the rest of the disciples. They had gained a great point when they were satisfied that they had seen the Lord, then were the disciples glad; but he would try whether they could keep the ground they had got, when they saw no more of him for some days. And thus he would gradually wean them from his bodily presence, which they had doted and depended too much upon.

3. That he might put an honour upon the first day of the week, and give a plain intimation of his will, that it should be observed in his church as the Christian sabbath, i. e. the weekly day of holy rest, and holy convocations. That one day in seven should be religiously observed, was an appointment from the beginning, as old as innocency; and that in the kingdom of the Messiah the first day of the week should be that solemn day, this was indication enough that Christ on that day once and again met his disciples in a religious assembly; and it is highly probable, in his former appearance to them, he appointed them that day seven-night to be together again, and promised to meet them; and also, that he appeared to them every first day of the week, besides other times, during the forty days: And the religious observance of that day has been from thence transmitted down to us through every age of the church. This therefore is the day which the Lord has made.

Secondly, Where and how Christ made them this visit, it was at Jerusalem, for the doors were shut now, as before, for fear of the Jews. There they stayed to keep the feast of unleavened bread seven days, which expired the day before this, yet they would not set out on their journey to Galilee on the first day of the week, because it was the Christian sabbath, but stayed till the day after. Now observe,

1. That Thomas was with them; though he had withdrawn himself once, yet not a second time. When we have lost one opportunity, we should give the more earnest heed to lay hold on the next, that we may recover our losses: It is a good sign if such a loss whet our desires, and a bad sign if it cool them. And the disciples admitted him among them, and did not insist upon his believing the resurrection of Christ, as they did, because as yet it was but darkly revealed; they did not receive him to doubtful disputation, but bid him welcome to come and see. But observe, Christ did not appear to Thomas for his satisfaction till he found him in society with the rest of the disciples, because he would countenance the meetings of Christians and ministers, for there will he be in the midst of them. And besides, he would have all the disciples witnesses of the rebuke he gave to Thomas; and yet withal, of the tender care he had of him.

2. That Christ came in among them, and stood in the midst, and they all knew him, for he shewed himself now, just as he had shewed himself before, *ver. 19.* still the same, and no changeling. See the condescension of our Lord Jesus! The gates of heaven were ready to be opened to him, and there he might have been in the midst of the adorations of a world of angels, yet for the benefit of his church he lingered on earth, and visited the little private meetings of his poor disciples, and is in the midst of them.

3. He saluted them all in a friendly manner, as he had done before, he said, *peace be unto you.* This was no vain repetition, but significant of the abundant, and assured peace which Christ gives, and of the continuance of his blessings upon his people, for they fail not, but are new every morning, new every meeting.

Thirdly, What passed between Christ and Thomas at this meeting; and that only is recorded, though we may suppose he said a deal to the rest of them. Here is,

1. Christ's gracious condescension to Thomas, *ver. 27.* He singled him out from the rest, and applied himself particularly to him, reach hither thy finger, and since thou wilt have it so, behold my hands, and satisfy thy curiosity to the utmost about the print of the nails;



*"ails ; reach hither thy hand, and if nothing less will convince thee, thrust it into my side. Here we have,*

1. An implicit rebuke of Thomas's incredulity, in the plain reference which is here had to what Thomas had said, answering it *word for word*, for he had heard it though unseen ; and one would think his telling him of it should *put him to the blush*. Note, There is not an unbelieving word in our tongues, no nor thought in our minds at any time, but it is known to the Lord Jesus, *Psal. lxxviii. 21.*

2. An express condescension to his weakness, which appears in two things. 1. That he suffers his wisdom to be prescribed to. Great spirits will not be dictated to by their inferiors, especially in their acts of grace, yet Christ is pleased here to accommodate himself even to Thomas's fancy, in a needless thing, rather than break with him, and leave him in his unbelief. He will not *break the bruised reed*, but as a good shepherd gathers that which was driven away, *Ezek. xxxiv. 16.* We ought thus to bear the infirmities of the weak, *Rom. xv. 1, 2.* 2. He suffers his wounds to be raked into ; allows Thomas even to thrust his hand into his side, if then at last he would believe. Thus for the confirmation of our faith he hath instituted an ordinance on purpose to keep his death in remembrance, though it was an ignominious, shameful death, and one would think should rather have been forgotten, and no more said of it ; yet because it was such an evidence of his love, as would be an encouragement to our faith, he appoints the memorial of it to be celebrated. And in that ordinance wherein we shew the Lord's death, we are called, as it were, to put our finger into the print of the nails : Reach hither thy hand to him, who reacheth forth his helping, inviting, giving hand to thee.

It is an affecting word with which Christ closeth up what he had to say to Thomas, *Be not faithless but believing ; μή γίνῃς ἀπιστός, do not thou become an unbeliever ;* as if he should have been sealed up under unbelief, had he not yielded now. This warning is given to us all, *Be not faithless ;* for if we are faithless we are Christless and graceless, hopeless, and joyless ; let us therefore say, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

2. Thomas's believing-consent to Jesus Christ. He is now ashamed of his incredulity, and cries out, *My Lord and my God*, ver. 28. We are not told whether he did put his finger into the print of the nails ; it should seem he did not, for Christ saith, ver. 29. *Thou hast seen and believed, seeing sufficed.* And now faith comes off a conqueror, after a struggle with unbelief.

1. Thomas is now fully satisfied of the truth of Christ's resurrection ; that the same Jesus that was crucified is now alive, and this is he. His slowness and backwardness to believe, may help to strengthen our faith ; for hereby it appears that the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, who attested it to the world, and pawned their lives upon it, were not easy, credulous men, but cautious enough, and that suspended their belief of it till they saw the utmost evidence of it they could desire. Thus out of the eater came forth meat.

2. He therefore believed him to be Lord and God, and we are to believe him so. 1. We must believe his deity, that he is God ; not a man made God, but God made man, as this evangelist had laid down his thesis at first, *chap. i. 1.* The author and head of our holy religion has the wisdom, power, sovereignty, and unchangeableness of God, which was necessary, because he was to be not only the founder of it, but the foundation of it for its constant support, and the fountain of life for its supply. 2. His mediation, that he is Lord, the one Lord, *1 Cor. viii. 5 : 1 Tim. ii. 5.* He is sufficiently authorized as plenipotentiary to settle the great concerns that lie between God and man ; to take up the controversy which would inevitably have been our ruin, and to establish the correspondence that was necessary to our happiness ; see *Acts ii. 36. Rom. xiv. 9.*

3. He consented to him as his Lord and his God, In faith there must be the consent of the will to *gospel terms*, as well as the assent of the understanding to *gospel truths*. We must accept of Christ to be that to us which the Father hath appointed him. *My Lord* refers to *Adonai*, my foundation and stay. *My God*, to *Elohim*, my prince and judge. God having constituted him the umpire and referee, we must approve the choice, and intirely refer ourselves to him. This is the vital act of faith, he is mine, *Cant. ii. 16.*

4. He made an open profession of this, before those that had been the witnesses of his unbelieving doubts. He saith it to Christ, and to compleat the sense we must read it, *thou art my Lord and my God ;* or, speaking to his brethren, *this is my Lord and my God.* Do we accept of Christ as our Lord God ? we must go to him, and tell him so, as David, *Psal. xvi. 2.* deliver the surrender to him as our *act and deed*. Tell others so, as those that triumph in our relation to Christ, *This is my beloved.* Thomas speaks with an ardency of affection, as one that took hold of Christ with all his might, *My Lord, and my God.*

3. The judgment of Christ upon the whole, ver. 29. *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed, and it is well thou art brought to it at last upon any terms, But blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Here,

1. Christ owns Thomas a believer. Sound and sincere believers, though they be slow and weak, shall be graciously accepted of the

Lord Jesus. They who have long stood it out, if at last they yield, shall find him ready to forgive. No sooner did Thomas consent to Christ, but Christ gives him the comfort of it, and lets him know that he believes.

2. He upbraids him with his former incredulity. He might well be ashamed to think, 1. That he had been so backward to believe, and came so slowly to his own comforts. They that in sincerity have closed with Christ see a great deal of reason to lament it that they did not do it sooner. 2. That it was not without much ado that he was brought to believe at last. If thou hadst not seen me alive thou wouldst not have believed ; but if no evidence must be admitted but that of our own senses, and we must believe nothing but what we ourselves are eye-witnesses of, farewell all commerce and conversation. If this must be the only method of proof, how must the world be converted to the faith of Christ ? He is therefore justly blamed for laying so much stress upon this.

3. He commends the faith of those who believe upon easier terms. Thomas as a believer was truly blessed, but rather *blessed are they that have not seen.* It is not meant of not seeing the objects of faith, for those are invisible, *Heb. xi. 1. 2 Cor. iv. 18.* but the motives of faith ; Christ's miracles, and especially his resurrection ; blessed are they that see not these and yet believe in Christ. This may look, either backward, upon the Old Testament saints who had not seen the things which they saw, and yet believed the promise made unto the fathers, and lived by that faith ; or forward, upon them which should afterwards believe ; the Gentiles who had never seen Christ in the flesh, as the Jews had. This faith is more laudable and praise worthy than theirs who saw and believed ; for, 1. It evidenceth a better temper of mind in those that do believe. Not to see and yet to believe, argues greater industry in searching after truth, and greater ingenuity of mind in embracing it. He that believes upon that sight, hath his resistance conquered by a sort of violence, but he that believes without that, like the Bereans, is more noble. 2. It is a greater instance of the power of divine grace. The less sensible the evidence is, the more doth the work of faith appear to be the Lord's doing : Peter is blessed in his faith, because flesh and blood has not revealed it to him, *Mat. xvi. 17.* Flesh and blood contribute more to their faith that see and believe, than to theirs who see not, and yet believe. Dr. Lightfoot quotes a saying of one of the Rabbins, " That one proselyte is more acceptable to God than all the thousands of Israel that stood before mount Sinai, for they saw and received the law, but a proselyte sees not, and yet receives it "

Fourthly, The remark which the evangelist makes upon his narrative, like an historian drawing towards a conclusion, ver. 30, 31. And here,

1. He assures us that many other things occurred which were all worthy to be recorded, but are not written in the book : *Many signs.* Some refer this to all the signs that Jesus did during his whole life, all the wondrous words he spoke, and all the wondrous works he did : but it seems rather to be confined to the signs he did after his resurrection, for these were in the presence of the disciples only, which are here spoken of, *Acts x. 41.* Divers of his appearances are not recorded, as appears, *1 Cor. xv. 5, 7.* see *Acts i. 3.* Now,

1. We may here improve this general attestation, that there were other signs, many other, for the confirmation of our faith ; and being added to the particular narratives, very much strengthens the evidence. They that recorded the resurrection of Christ were not put to fish for evidence, to take up such short and scanty proofs as they could find, and make up the rest with conjecture ; no, they had evidence enough and to spare, and more witnesses to produce than they had occasion for. The disciple, in whose presence these other signs were done, were to be preachers of Christ's resurrection to others, and therefore it was requisite they should have proofs of it, *ex abundanti*, that they might have a strong consolation who ventured life and all upon it.

2. We need not ask why they were not all written, or why not more than these, or other than these, for it is enough for us that so it seemed good to the holy Spirit, by whose inspiration this was given. Had this history been a meer human composition, it had been swelled with a multitude of depositions and affidavits, to prove the contested truth of Christ's resurrection, and long arguments drawn up for the demonstration of it, but being a divine history, the penmen write with a noble security, relating what amounted to a competent proof, sufficient to convince those that were willing to be taught, and to condemn those that were obstinate in their unbelief ; and if this satisfy not, more would not. Men produce all they have to say, that they may gain credit, but God doth not, for he can give faith. Had this history been written for the entertainment of the curious, it would have been more copious, for every circumstance would have brightened, and embellished the story ; but it was written to bring men to believe, and enough is said to answer that intention, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.

2. He instructs us in the design of recording what we do find here, ver. 31. These accounts are given in this and the following chapter, that ye might believe upon these evidences, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, declared with power to be so by his resurrection.



1. Here is the *design* of those that *wrote the gospel*. Some write books for their diversion, and publish them for their profit or applause, others to oblige the Athenian humour, others to instruct the world in arts and sciences for their secular advantage; but the evangelists wrote without any view of temporal benefit to themselves or others, but to bring men to Christ and heaven, and in order to that to persuade men to believe; and for this they took the most fitting methods, they brought to the world a *divine revelation*, supported with its *due evidences*.

2. The duty of those that read and hear the gospel: It is their duty to believe, to embrace the doctrine of Christ, and that record given concerning him, 1 John v. 11.

1. We are here told what the great gospel truth is which we are to believe, that *Jesus is that Christ*, that *Son of God*. 1. That he is *the Christ*; the person that under the title of the Messiah was promised to, and expected by the Old Testament saints; and that, according to the signification of the name, is *anointed* of God to be a prince and a saviour. 2. That he is the *Son of God*; not only as Mediator, for then he had not been greater than Moses who was both a prophet, intercessor, and lawgiver, but antecedent to his being the mediator, for if he had not been a divine person, endued with the power of a God, and entitled to the glory of a God, he had not been qualified for the undertaking, not fit either to do the Redeemer's work, or to wear the Redeemer's crown.

2. What the great gospel blessedness is which we are to hope for, *That believing we shall have life through his name*. This is, 1. To direct our faith; it must have an eye to the life, the crown of life, the tree of life set before us. *Life through Christ's name*; the life proposed in the covenant which is made with us in Christ, is what we must propose to ourselves as the fulness of our joy, and the abundant recompence of all our services and sufferings. 2. To encourage our faith, and invite us to believe. Upon the prospects of some great advantage men will venture far, and greater advantage there cannot be than that which is offered by the *words of this life*, as the gospel is called, Acts v. 20. it includes both spiritual life in conformity to God and communion with him, and eternal life in the vision and fruition of him. Both are *through Christ's name*, by his merit and power, and both indefeasibly sure to all true believers.

## C H A P. XXI.

The evangelist seemed to have concluded his history with the foregoing chapter; but as St. Paul sometimes in his epistles, new matter occurring, he begins again. He had said, that there were many other signs which Jesus did for the proof of his resurrection. And in this chapter he instanceth in one of those many, which was Christ's appearance to some of his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, in which we have an account, (1.) How he discovered himself to them as they were fishing, filled their net, and then very familiarly came and dined with them upon what they had caught, ver. 1.—14. (2.) What discourse he had with Peter after dinner, (1.) Concerning himself, ver. 15.—20. (2.) Concerning John, ver. 21.—23. (3.) The solemn conclusion of this gospel, ver. 24, 25. It is strange any should suppose that this chapter was added by some other hand, when it is expressly said, ver. 24. That the disciple whom Jesus loved, is he which testifieth these things.

1. After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. 3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. 4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. 6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. 7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fishers coat unto him, (for he was naked) and did cast himself into the sea. 8. And the other disciples came in a little ship (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fishes. 9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. 10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish, which ye have now caught. 11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. 12. Jesus saith unto them, No. 98.

Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13. Jesus then cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

We have here an account of Christ's appearance to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias. Now,

1. Let us compare this appearance with those that went before. In those Christ shewed himself to his disciples when they were met in a solemn assembly (it should seem for religious worship) upon a Lord's day, and when they were all together, perhaps, expecting his appearing; but in this he shewed himself to some of them occasionally, upon a week day, when they were fishing, and little thought of it. Christ has many ways of making himself known to his people, usually, in his ordinances; but sometimes by his Spirit he visits them when they are employed in common business, as the *shepherds* who were *keeping their flock by night*; Luke ii. 8. even here also, Gen. xvi. 13.

2. Let us compare it with that which followed at the mountain in Galilee, where Christ had appointed them to meet him, Mat. xxviii. 16. Thitherward they moved as soon as the days of unleavened bread were over, and disposed of themselves as they thought fit, till the time fixed for this interview, or general rendezvous. Now this appearance was while they were waiting for that, that they might not be weary of waiting. Christ is often better than his word, but never worse; often prevents and outdoes the believing expectations of his people, but never disappoints them.

As to the particulars of the story we may observe,

First, Who they were to whom Christ now shewed himself, ver. 2. not to all the twelve, but to seven of them only. Nathanael is mentioned as one of them whom we have not met with since John i. but some think he was the same with Bartholomew, one of the twelve. The two not named are supposed to be Philip of Bethsaida, and Andrew of Capernaum. Observe here,

1. It is good for the disciples of Christ to be *much together*; not only in solemn, religious assemblies, but in common conversation, and about common business. Good Christians should by this means both testify and increase their affection to, and delight in each other, and edify one another both by discourse and example. 2. Christ chose to manifest himself to them when they were together; not only to countenance Christian society, but that they might be joint witnesses of the same matter of fact, and so might corroborate one another's testimony. Here were seven together to attest this; on which occasion some observe, that the Roman law required seven witnesses to a testament.

3. Thomas was one of them, and is named next to Peter, as if he now kept closer to the meetings of the apostles than ever. It is well, if losses, by our neglects, make us more careful afterwards not slip opportunities.

Secondly, How they were employed, ver. 3. Observe,

1. Their agreement to go a fishing. They knew not well what to do with themselves: For my part, saith Peter, I will go a fishing; we will go with thee then, say they, for we will keep together. Though commonly two of a trade cannot agree, yet they could. Some think they did amiss in returning to their boats and nets which they had left; but then Christ would not have countenanced them in it with a visit. It was rather commendable in them; for they did it, 1. To redeem time, and not be idle. They were not yet appointed to preach the resurrection of Christ. Their commission was in the drawing, but not perfected. The hour for entering upon action was not come: It is likely their Master had directed them to say nothing of his resurrection till after his ascension, nay, not till after the pouring out of the Spirit, and then they were to begin at Jerusalem. Now in the mean time rather than do nothing, they would go a fishing; not for recreation, but for business.

It is an instance of their humility, though they were advanced to be sent of Christ, as he was of the Father, yet they did not take state upon them, but remembered the rock out of which they were hewn. It is an instance likewise of their industry, and speaks them good husbands of their time. While they were waiting they would not be idling. Those who would give an account of their time with joy, should contrive to fill up the vacancies of it, to gather up the fragments of it. 2. That they might help to maintain themselves, and not be burthensome to any. While their Master was with them, those that ministered to him were kind to them; but now the bridegroom was taken from them they must fast in those days, and therefore their own hands, as Paul's, must minister to their necessities; and for that reason Christ asked them, Have ye any meat? This teacheth us with quietness to work, and eat our own bread.

2. Their disappointment in their fishing. That night they caught nothing, though it is likely they toiled all night, as Luke v. 5. See the vanity of this world; the hand of the diligent often returns empty. Even good men may come short of desired success in their



honest undertakings. We may be in the way of our duty, and yet not prosper. Providence so ordered it that of all night they should catch nothing, that the miraculous draughts of fishes in the morning might be the more wonderful, and the more acceptable. In those disappointments which to us are very grievous, God has often designs that are very gracious. Man has indeed a *dominion over the fish of the sea*, but they are not always at his beck; God only knows the *paths of the sea*, and commands that which *passeth through them*.

Thirdly, After *what manner* Christ made himself known to them. It is said, *ver. 1. He shewed himself*. His body, though a true and real body, yet was raised, as ours will be, a spiritual body, and so was visible only when he himself was pleased to make it so; or rather, came and removed so quickly, that it was *here or there* instant in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Four things are observable in the appearance of Christ to them,

1. He shewed himself to them seasonably. *Ver. 4. When the morning was now come*, after a fruitless night's toil, Jesus stood on the shore. Christ's time of making himself known to his people is, when they are most at a loss. When they think they have lost themselves, he will let them know they have not lost him. Weeping may endure for a night; but joy comes, if Christ comes, in the morning. Christ appeared to them not walking upon the water, because being risen from the dead, he was not to be with them as he had been; but standing upon the shore, because now they were to make towards him. Some of the ancients put this significancy upon it, that Christ having finished his work was got through a stormy sea, a sea of blood, to a safe and quiet shore, where he stood in triumph; but the disciples having their work before them were yet at sea in toil and peril. It is comfort to us when our passage is rough and stormy, that our Master is at shore, and we are hastening to him.

2. He shewed himself to them gradually. The disciples, though they had been intimately acquainted with him, *knew not* presently that it was Jesus. Little expecting to see him there, and not looking intently upon him, they took him for some common person, waiting the arrival of their boat to buy their fish. Note, Christ is often nearer us than we think he is, and so we shall find afterwards to our comfort.

3. He shewed himself to them by an instance of his pity, *ver. 5*. He called to them, *children, and Na, Lads, have ye any meat?* Have ye caught any fish? Here, 1. The compellation is very familiar; he speaketh unto them as unto his sons, with the care and tenderness of a father, *children*. Though he was now entered upon his exalted state, he spoke to his disciples with as much kindness and affection as ever. They were not children in age, but they were his children; the children, which God had given him. 2. The question is very kind; *Have ye any meat?* He asks, as a tender father concerning his children, whether they be provided with that which is fit for them? That if they be not, he may take care for their supply. Note, *The Lord is for the body*, 1 Cor. vi. 13. Christ takes cognizance of the temporal wants of his people, and has promised them not only grace sufficient, but food convenient. *Verily they shall be fed*, Psal. xxxvii. 3. Christ looks into the cottages of the poor, and asks, *Children, have ye any meat?* Thereby inviting them to open their case before him, and by the prayer of faith to make their requests known to him, and then let them be careful for nothing; for Christ takes care of them, takes care for them. Christ has herein set us an example of compassionate concern for our brethren; there are many poor householders disabled for labour, or disappointed in it, that are reduced to straits whom the rich should enquire after thus, *Have ye any meat?* for the most necessitous are commonly the least clamorous.

To this question the disciples gave a short answer, and some think with an air of discontent and peevishness. They said, *No*. Not giving him any such friendly and respectful title as he had given them: So short do the best come in their returns of love to the Lord Jesus. Christ put the question to them, not because he did not know their wants; but he would know them from them. They that would have supplies from Christ, must own themselves empty and needy.

4. He shewed himself to them by an instance of his power; and this perfected the discovery. *Ver. 6*. He ordered them to cast the net on the right side of the ship, the contrary side to what they had been casting it on, and then they, who were going home empty handed, were enriched with a great draught of fishes. Here we have,

1. The orders Christ gave them, and the promise annexed to those orders. *Cast the net* there in such a place, and *you shall find*. He from whom nothing is hid, no not the inhabitants under the waters, (Job xxvi. 5.) knew on what side of the ship the shoal of fishes was, and to that side he directs them. Note, Divine providence extends it self to things most minute and contingent, and they are happy that know how to take hints from thence in the conduct of their affairs, and acknowledge it in all their ways.

2. Their obedience to these orders, and the good success of that. As yet they knew not that it was Jesus, however they were willing to be advised by any body, and not bid this supposed stranger mind

his own business, and not meddle with theirs, but took his counsel; and in being thus observant of strangers, they were obedient to their masters unawares. And it sped wonderfully well; now they had a draught that paid them for all their pains. Note, Those that are humble, diligent, and patient, though their labours may be crossed, they shall be crowned; they sometimes live to see their affairs take a happy turn after many struggles, and fruitless attempts. There is nothing lost by observing Christ's orders. Those are likely to speed well that follow the rule of the word, the conduct of the Spirit, and the intimations of providence; for that is casting the net on the right side of the ship.

Now the draught of fishes may be considered,

1. As a miracle in it self: And so it was designed, to prove that Jesus Christ was raised in power, though sown in weakness; and that all things were put under his feet, the fishes of the sea not excepted. Christ manifests himself to his people by doing that for them which none else can do, and things which they looked not for.

2. As a mercy to them; for the seasonable and abundant supply of their necessities. When their ingenuity and industry failed them, the power of Christ came in opportunely for their relief; for he would take care that they who had left all for him, should not want any good thing. When we are most at a loss, Jehovah jireh.

3. As the memorial of a former mercy, with which Christ had formerly recompensed Peter for the loan of his boat, *Luke v. 4, 5, &c.* This miracle nearly resembled that, and could not but put Peter in mind of that, which helped him to improve this; for both that and this affected him much, as meeting him in his own element, in his own employment. Latter favours are designed to bring to mind former favours, that eaten bread may not be forgotten.

4. As a mystery, and very significant of that work to which Christ was now with an enlarged commission sending them forth. The prophets had been fishing for souls, and caught nothing, or very little; but the apostles, that let down the net at Christ's word, had wonderful success, *Many were the children of the desolate*, Gal. iv. 27. They themselves, in pursuance of their former mission, when they were first made *fishers of men*, had had small success in comparison with what they should now have. When, soon after this, three thousand were converted in one day, then the net was cast on the right side of the ship. It is an encouragement to Christ's ministers to continue their diligence in their work. One happy draught at length may be sufficient to repay many years toil at the gospel net.

Fourthly, How the disciples received this discovery which Christ made of himself, *ver. 7, 8*. Where we find,

1. That John was the most intelligent and quick sighted disciple. He whom Jesus loved was the first that said, *It is the Lord*; for those whom Christ loves he will in a special manner manifest himself to: His secret is with his favourites. John had adhered more closely to his Master in his sufferings than any of them; and therefore he has a clearer eye, and a more discerning judgment than any of them, in recompence for his constancy. When John was himself aware that it was the Lord, he communicated his knowledge to those with him; for this dispensation of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withal. They that know Christ themselves should endeavour to bring others acquainted with him, we need not engross him; there is enough in him for us all. John tells Peter particularly his thoughts, that it was the Lord; knowing he would be glad to see him above any of them. Though Peter had denied his Master; yet having repented, and being taken into the communion of his disciples again, they were as free and familiar with him as ever.

2. That Peter was the most zealous and warm-hearted disciple; for as soon as he heard it was the Lord, for which he took John's word, the ship could not hold him, nor could he stay the bringing of it to shore, but into the sea he throws himself presently that he might come first to Christ.

(1.) He shewed his respect to Christ by girding his fisher's coat about him, that he might appear before his Master in the best clothes he had, and not rudely rush into his presence stript as he was to his waistcoat and drawers, because the work he was about was toilsome, and he was resolved to take pains in it. Perhaps this fisher's coat was made of leather, or oil cloth, and would keep out wet; and he girt it to him that he might make the best of his way through the water to Christ, as he used to do after his nets, when he was intent upon his fishing.

(2.) He shewed the strength of his affection to Christ, and his earnest desire to be with him, by casting himself into the sea; and either wading or swimming to shore to come to him. When he walked upon the water to Christ, *Mat. xiv. 28, 29*. It was said, *He came down out of the ship* deliberately; but here it is said, *He cast himself into the sea* with precipitation, sink or swim, he would shew his good will and aim to be with Jesus. If Christ suffer me (thinks he) to drown and come short of him, it is but what I deserve for denying him. Peter had had much forgiven, and made it appear he loved much by his willingness to run hazards and undergo hardships to come to him. They that have been with Jesus, will be willing to swim through a stormy sea, a sea of blood, to come to him.

And



And it is a laudable contention among Christ's *disciples*, to strive who shall be first with him.

3. That the rest of the *disciples* were careful and honest hearted: Though they were not in such a transport of zeal as to *throw themselves into the sea*, like Peter, yet they hastened in the boat to the shore, and made the best of their way, *ver. 8.* The other *disciples*, and John with them, who had first discovered that it was Christ, came slowly, yet they came to Christ. Now here we may observe,

1. How variously God dispenseth his gifts. Some excel, as Peter and John; are very eminent in *gifts and graces*, and are thereby distinguished from *their brethren*; others are but ordinary *disciples*, that mind their duty, and are faithful to him, but do nothing to make themselves remarkable; and yet both the one and the other, the eminent and the obscure, shall sit down together with Christ in glory; nay, and, perhaps, the last shall be first. Of those that do excel, some, like John, are eminently contemplative, have great *gifts of knowledge*, and serve the church with that; others, like Peter, eminently active and courageous, are strong, and do exploits, and are thus very serviceable to their generation. Some are useful as the church's eyes; others, as the church's hands; and all for the good of the body.

2. What a great deal of difference there may be between some good people and others in the way of their honouring Christ, and yet both *accepted of him*. Some serve Christ more in acts of devotion, and extraordinary expressions of a religious zeal, and they do well, to the Lord they do it; Peter ought not to be censured for casting himself into the sea, but commended for his zeal, and the strength of his affection; and so must they be, that, in love to Christ, quit the world, with Mary, to sit at his feet: But others serve Christ more in the affairs of the world, they continue in that ship, drag the net, and bring the fish to shore, as the other *disciples* here; and such ought not to be censured as worldly; for they, in their place, are as truly serving Christ, as the other, even in serving tables. If all the *disciples* had done as Peter did, what had become of their fish, and their nets? And yet if Peter had done as they did, we had wanted the instance of holy zeal. Christ was well pleased with both, and so must we.

3. That there are several ways of bringing Christ's *disciples* to shore to him from off the sea of this world. Some are brought to him by a violent death, as the martyrs, that threw themselves into the sea in their zeal for Christ; others are brought to him by a natural death, dragging the net, which is less terrible; but both meet at length on the safe and quiet shore with Christ.

Fifthly, What entertainment the Lord Jesus gave them when they came ashore.

1. He had provision ready for them. When they came to land, wet and cold, weary and hungry, they found a good fire there to warm them, and dry them, and fish, and bread; competent provision for a good meal.

(1.) We need not be curious in enquiring whence this fire, and fish, and bread came, no more than whence the meat came, which the ravens brought Elijah: He that could multiply the loaves and fishes that were, could make new ones if he pleased, or turn stones into bread, or send his angels to fetch it, where he knew it was to be had. It is uncertain whether this provision was made in the open air, or in some fisher's cabin, or hut upon the shore; here was nothing stately or delicate; we should be content with mean things, for Christ was.

(2.) We may be comforted in this instance of Christ's care of his *disciples*; he has wherewith to supply all their needs, and knows what things we have need of: He kindly provided for those fishermen, when they came weary from their work; for, verily they shall be fed, who trust in the Lord, and do good. It is encouraging to Christ's ministers, whom he hath made *fishers of men*, that they may depend upon him, who employs them, to provide for them; and if they should miss of encouragement in this world, should be reduced, as Paul was, to hunger and thirst, and fastings often; let them content themselves with what they have here, they have better things in reserve, and shall eat and drink with Christ at his table in his kingdom, Luke xxii. 30. A while ago the *disciples* had entertained Christ with a broiled fish, Luke xxiv. 42. and now, as a friend, he returned their kindness, and entertained them with one; nay, in the draught of fishes, he repayed them more than a hundred fold.

2. He called for some of that which they had caught, and they produced it, *ver. 10, 11.* Observe here,

(1.) The command Christ gave them to bring their draught of fish to shore. Bring of the fish hither which you have now caught, and let us have some of them; not as if he needed it, and could not make up a dinner for them without it; but, 1. He would have them eat the labour of their hands, Psalm cxxviii. 2. What is got by God's blessing on our own industry, and honest labour, if withal God give us power to eat of it, and enjoy good in our labour, hath a peculiar sweetness in it. It is said of the slothful man, that he roasteth not that which he took in hunting; cannot find in his heart to dress what he has been at the pains to take, Prov. xii. 27. But Christ would hereby teach us to use what we have. 2. He would have them taste the gifts of his miraculous bounty, that they might be witnesses both of his power and of his goodness.

The benefits Christ bestows upon us, are not to be buried and laid up, but to be used and laid out. 3. He would give a specimen of the spiritual entertainment he has for all believers, which, in this respect, is most free and familiar, that he sups with them, and they with him; their graces are pleasing to him, and his comforts are so to them; what he works in them, he accepts from them. 4. Ministers, that are *fishers of men*, must bring all they catch to their Master, for on him their success depends.

(2.) Their obedience to this command, *ver. 11.* It was said, *ver. 6.* they were not able to draw the net to shore, for the multitude of fishes, i. e. they found it difficult, it was more than they could well do; but he that bid them bring it to shore, made it easy. Thus the *fishers of men*, when they have inclosed souls in the gospel net, cannot bring them to shore, cannot carry on, and complete the good work begun, without the continued influence of the divine grace. If he that helped us to catch them, when, without his help, we should have caught nothing, do not help us to keep them, and draw them to land, by building them up in their most holy faith, we shall lose them at last, 1 Cor. iii. 7.

Observe, 1. Who it was that was most active in landing the fish, it was Peter; who, as in the former instance, *ver. 7.* he had shewed a more zealous affection to his Master's person than any of them, so in this shewed a more ready obedience to his Master's command; but all that are faithful are not alike forward.

2. The number of the fishes that were caught: They had the curiosity to count them, and, perhaps, it was in order to the making of a dividend; they were in all a hundred and fifty and three; and all great fishes. These were many more than they needed for their present supply, but they might sell them, and the money would serve to bear their charges back to Jerusalem; whither they were shortly to return.

3. A further instance of Christ's care of them, to increase both the miracle and the mercy; for all there were so many, and great fishes too, yet was not the net broken; so that they lost none of their fish, nor damaged their net. It was said, Luke v. 6. their net brake. Perhaps, this was a borrowed net, for they had long since left their own; and, if so, Christ would teach us to take care of what we have borrowed, as much as if it were our own. It was well their net did not break, for they had not now the leisure they had had to mend their nets. The net of the gospel has inclosed multitudes, three thousand in one day, and yet is not broken; it is still as mighty as ever to bring souls to God.

3. He invited them to dinner. Observing them to keep their distance, and that they were afraid to ask him, *Who art thou?* because they knew it was their Lord, he called to them very familiarly, *Come and dine.*

(1.) See here how free Christ was with his *disciples*, he treated them as friends; he did not say, *Come and wait, come and attend me, but, Come and dine:* Not go dine with your selves, as servants are appointed to do, but, *Come and dine with me.* This kind invitation may be alluded to, to illustrate, 1. The call Christ gives his *disciples* into communion with him in grace here: *All things are now ready, Come and dine.* Christ is a feast, come dine upon him; his flesh is meat indeed, his blood drink indeed. Christ is a friend, come dine with him, he will bid you welcome, Cant. v. 1.

2. The call he will give them into the fruition of him in glory hereafter: *Come, ye blessed of my Father; Come and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob:* Christ has wherewithal to dine all his friends and followers; there is room and provision enough for them all.

(2.) See how reverend the *disciples* were before Christ, they were somewhat shy of using the freedom he invited them to, and, by his courting them to their meat, it should seem, they stood pausing: Being to eat with a ruler, such a ruler, they consider diligently what is before them: None of them durst ask him, *Who art thou?* Either, 1. Because they would not be so bold with him: Though, perhaps, he appeared now in something of a disguise at first, as to the two *disciples*, when their eyes were holden that they should not know him; yet they had very good reason to think it was he, and could be no other. 2. Because they would not so far betray their own folly. When he had given them this instance of his power and goodness, they must be stupid indeed, if they questioned whether it was he or no. When God, in his providence, hath given us sensible proofs of his care for our bodies, and hath given us, in his grace, manifest proofs of his good will to our souls, and good work upon them, we should be ashamed of our distrusts, and not dare to question that which he has left us no room to question: Groundless doubts must be stifled, and not started.

4. He carved to them, as the master of the feast, *ver. 13.* Observing them to be still shy and timorous, he comes and takes bread himself, and giveth them, some to each of them, and fish likewise: No doubt, he craved a blessing, and gave thanks, as Luke xxiv. 30. but, it being his known and constant practice, it did not need to be mentioned.

(1.) The entertainment here was but ordinary, it was but a fish-dinner, but coarsely dressed; here was nothing pompous, nothing curious; plentiful indeed, but plain and homely: Hunger is the best sauce. Christ, though entered upon his exalted state, shewed himself alive by eating, not shewed himself a prince by feasting. Those that could not content themselves with bread and fish, unless



less they have fauce and wine, would scarce have found in their hearts to dine with Christ himself here.

(2.) Christ himself began: Though, perhaps, having a glorified body, *he needed not to eat*, yet he would shew that he had a true body which was capable of eating. The apostles produced this as one proof of his resurrection, that they had eaten and drunk with him, Acts x. 41.

(3.) He gave the meat about to all his guests: He not only provided it for them, and invited them to it, but he himself divided it among them, and put it into their hands: Thus to him we owe the application, as well as the purchase of the benefits of redemption: He giveth us power to eat of them.

The evangelist leaves them at dinner, and makes this remark, ver. 14. That this is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself alive to his disciples, or the greater part of them. This is the third day, so some. On the day he rose he appeared five times; the second day was that day seven-night; and this was the third: Or, this was his third appearance to any considerable number of his disciples together; though he had appeared to Mary, to the women, to the two disciples, to Cephas, yet he had but twice before this appeared to any company of them together. This is taken notice of, 1. For the confirming the truth of his resurrection; the vision was doubled, was trebled, for the thing was certain: They who believed not the first sign, would be brought to believe the voice of the latter signs. 2. As an instance of Christ's continued kindness to his disciples; once and again, and a third time he visited them. It is good to keep account of Christ's gracious visits, for he keeps account of them, and they will be remembered against us, if we walk unworthily of them, as they were against Solomon, when he was minded that the Lord God of Israel had appeared unto him twice. This is now the third; have we made a due improvement of the first and second? See 1 Cor. xii. 14. This is the third, perhaps, it may be the last.

15. ¶ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He said unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18. Verily, verily I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thy self, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

We have here Christ's discourse with Peter after dinner, so much of it as relates to himself; in which,

First, He examines his love to him, and gives him a charge concerning his flock, ver. 15, 16, 17. Observe,

1. When Christ entered into this discourse with Peter, it was after they had dined; they had all eaten, and were filled, and, it is likely, were entertained with such edifying discourse, as our Lord Jesus used to make his table talk. Christ foresaw that what he had to say to Peter would give him some uneasiness, and therefore would not say it till they had dined, because he would not spoil his dinner. Peter was conscious to himself that he had incurred his Master's displeasure, and could expect no other but to be upbraided with his treachery and ingratitude: Was this thy kindness to thy friend? Did not I tell thee what a coward thou wouldest prove? Nay, he might justly expect to be struck out of the roll of the disciples, and to be expelled the sacred college: Twice, if not thrice, he had seen his Master since his resurrection, and he said not a word to him of it: We may suppose Peter full of doubts, upon what terms he stood with his Master; sometimes hoping the best, because he had received favours from him, in common with the rest; yet not without some fears, lest the chiding would come at last that would pay for all: But now at length his Master put him out of his pain, said what he had to say to him, and confirmed him in his place as an apostle: He did not tell him of his fault hastily, but deferred it for some time; did not tell him of it unseasonably, to disturb the company at dinner; but, when they had dined together, in token of reconciliation, then discoursed he with him about it, not as with a criminal, but as with a friend: Peter had reproached himself for it, and therefore Christ did not reproach him for it, nor tell him of it directly, but only by a tacit intimation; and, being satisfied in his sincerity, the offence was

not only forgiven, but forgotten; and Christ let him know that he was as dear to him as ever. Herein he has given us an encouraging instance of his tenderness towards penitents, and has taught us, in like manner, to restore such as are fallen with a spirit of meekness.

2. What was the discourse itself: Here was the same question three times asked, the same answer three times made, and the same reply three times given, with very little variation, and yet no vain repetition. It was repeated by our Saviour, in the speaking of it, the more to affect Peter, and the other disciples that were present; it is repeated by the evangelist, in the writing of it, the more to affect us, and all that read it.

(1.) Three times Christ asks Peter whether he loves him or no: The first time the question is, *Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?* Observe,

1. How he calls him; *Simon son of Jonas*. He speaks to him by name, the more to affect him, as Luke xxii. 31: *Simon, Simon*. He doth not call him *Cephas*, or *Peter*, the name he had given him, for he had lost the credit of his strength and stability, which those names signified, but his original name, *Simon*: Yet he gives him no hard language, doth not call him out of his name, though he deserved it; but, as he had called him when he pronounced him *blessed, Simon Bar-jona*, Matt. xvi. 17. He calls him *son of Jonas* (or John, or Johanan) to mind him of his extraction, how mean it was, and unworthy the honour to which he was advanced.

2. How he catechizeth him; *Lovest thou me more than these?*

(1.) *Lovest thou me?* If we would try whether we are Christ's disciples indeed, this must be the enquiry, Do we love him? But there was a special reason why Christ put it now to Peter.

1. His fall had given occasion to doubt of his love: Peter, I have cause to suspect thy love; for if thou hadst loved me, thou wouldest not have been ashamed and afraid to own me in my sufferings: How canst thou say thou lovest me, when thy heart was not with me? Note, We must not reckon it an affront to have our sincerity questioned, when we ourselves have done that which makes it questionable; after a shaking fall, we must take heed of settling too soon, lest we settle upon a wrong bottom. The question is affecting; he doth not ask, *Dost thou fear me? Dost thou honour me? Dost thou admire me?* but, *Dost thou love me?* Give but proofs of that, and the affront shall be passed by, and no more said of it. Peter had professed himself a penitent, witness his tears, and his return to the society of the disciples; he was now upon his probation as a penitent; but the question is not, *Simon, how much hast thou wept? How oft hast thou fasted, and afflicted thy soul?* But, *dost thou love me?* That is it which will make the other expressions of repentance acceptable. The great thing Christ eyes in penitents, is their eying him in their repentance: *Much is forgiven her*, not because she wept much, but because she loved much.

2. His function would give occasion for the exercise of his love: Before Christ would commit his sheep to his care, he asked him, *Lovest thou me?* Christ hath such a tender regard to his flock, that he will not trust it with any but those that love him, and therefore will love all that are his, for his sake. Those that do not truly love Christ, will never truly love the souls of men, nor will naturally care for their state as they should; nor will that minister love his work, that doth not love his Master. Nothing but the love of Christ will constrain ministers to go cheerfully through the difficulties and discouragements they meet with in their work, 2 Cor. v. 13, 14. But this love will make their work easy, and them in good earnest in it.

(2.) *Lovest thou me more than these? πλεον τετων.*

1. *Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these?* more than thou lovest these persons? Dost thou love me better than James or John, thy intimate friends? or Andrew, thy own brother and companion? Those do not love Christ aright, that do not love him better than the best friend they have in the world, and make it to appear, whenever they stand in comparison, or in competition. Or, *more than thou lovest these things*, these boats and nets; *more than all the pleasure of fishing*, which some make a recreation of; *more than the gain of fishing*, which others make a calling of. Those only love Christ indeed, that love him better than all the delights of sense, and all the profits of this world. "*Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these occupations thou art now employed in?* if so, leave them to imploy thy self wholly in feeding my flock." So Dr. Whitby.

2. *Lovest thou me more than these love me?* more than any of the rest of the disciples love me? And then it is either to upbraid him with his vain glorious boast: *Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I*. Art thou still of the same mind? Or, to intimate to him, that he had now more reason to love him than any of them had, for more had been forgiven to him than to any of them, as much as his sin in denying Christ, was greater than theirs in forsaking him. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most? Luke vii. 42. Note, We should all study to excel in our love to Christ: It is no breach of the peace to strive which shall love Christ best; nor any breach of good manners to go before others in this love.



The second and third time that Christ puts this question, (1.) He left out *more than these*; because Peter, in his answer, modestly left it out, not willing to compare himself with his brethren, much less to prefer himself before them. Though we cannot say we love Christ *more than others* do, yet we shall be accepted, if we can say we love him indeed. (2.) In the last he altered the word, as it is in the original: In the two first enquiries, the original word is, *Ἀγαπᾷς με*, *Dost thou retain a kindness for me?* In answer to which, Peter useth another word more emphatical, *φιλάω σε*, *I love thee dearly*. And the last time Christ useth that word; and dost thou indeed love me dearly?

(2.) Three times Peter returns the same answer to Christ, *Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee*. Observe,

1. Peter doth not pretend to love Christ *more than* the rest of the disciples did; he is now ashamed of that rash word of his, *Though all men deny thee, yet will not I*; and he had reason to be ashamed of it. Note, Though we must aim to be better than others, yet we must, in lowliness of mind, esteem others better than ourselves; for we know more evil by ourselves, than we do by any of our brethren.

2. Yet he professeth again and again, that he loved Christ; *Yea, Lord, surely I love thee*; I were unworthy to live, if I did not. He had a high esteem and value for him, a grateful sense of his kindness, and was entirely devoted to his honour and interest; his desire was towards him, as one he was undone without; and his delight in him, as one he should be unspeakably happy in. This amounts to a profession of repentance for his sin, for it grieves us to have affronted one we love; and to a promise of adherence to him for the future; *Lord, I love thee, and will never leave thee*. Christ prayed that his faith might not fail, Luke xxii. 32. and because his faith did not fail, his love did not; for faith will work by love. Peter had forfeited his claim of relation to Christ; he was now to be re-admitted upon his repentance; Christ puts his trial upon this issue, *Dost thou love me?* And Peter joins issues upon it, *Lord, I love thee*. Note, Those who can truly say, through grace, that they love Jesus Christ, may take the comfort of their interest in him, notwithstanding their daily infirmities.

3. He appeals to Christ himself for the proof of it; *Thou knowest that I love thee*: And the third time yet more emphatically; *Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee*. He doth not vouch his fellow-disciples to witness for him, they might be deceived in him; nor doth he think his own word might be taken, the credit of that was cracked already; but he calls Christ himself to witness. (1.) Peter was sure that Christ knew all things, and particularly that he knew the heart, and was a discernor of the thoughts and intents of that, John xvi. 30. (2.) Peter was satisfied of this, that Christ, who knew all things, knew the sincerity of his love to him, and would be ready to attest it in his favour. It is a terror to an hypocrite, to think that Christ knows all things; for the divine omniscience will be a witness against him: But it is a comfort to a sincere Christian, that he has that to appeal to; *my witness is in heaven, my record is on high*: Christ knows us better than we know ourselves: Though we know not our own uprightness, he doth.

4. He was grieved, when Christ asked him the third time, *Lovest thou me?* ver. 17. (1.) Because it put him in mind of his threefold denial of Christ, and was plainly designed to do so; and when he thought thereon he wept. Every remembrance of past sins, even pardoned sins, renews the sorrow of a true penitent: *Thou shalt be ashamed, when I am pacified towards thee*. (2.) Because it put him in fear, lest his Master forefaw some further miscarriage of his; which would be as great a contradiction to his profession of love to him, as the former was. Surely, thinks Peter, my Master would not thus put me upon the rack, if he did not see some cause for it: What would become of me, if I should be again tempted! Godly sorrow works carefulness and fear, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

(3.) Three times Christ committed the care of his flock to Peter: *Feed my lambs; feed my sheep; feed my sheep*.

1. Those whom Christ committed to Peter's care, were his lambs, and his sheep: The church of Christ is his flock, which he hath purchased with his own blood, Acts xx. 28. and he is the chief shepherd of it: In this flock some are lambs, young, and tender, and weak, others are sheep, grown to some strength and maturity: The shepherd here takes care of both, and of the lambs first, for upon all occasions he shewed a particular tenderness for them; the lambs he gathers in his arms, and carries in his bosom, Isa. xl. 11.

2. The charge he gives him concerning them, is to feed them. The word used, ver. 15, 17. is *βόσκει*, which strictly signifies, to give them food; but the word used, ver. 16. is *ποιμαίνω*, which signifies more largely to do all the offices of a shepherd to them: *Feed the lambs with that which is proper for them, and the sheep likewise with food convenient*. The lost sheep of the house of Israel, seek and feed them, and the other sheep also which are not of this fold. Note, It is the duty of all Christ's ministers, to feed his lambs and sheep. Feed them, i. e. teach them; for the doctrine of the gospel is spiritual food. Feed them, i. e. lead them to the green pastures, presiding in their religious assemblies, and ministering all the ordinances to them: Feed them, by personal application to

their respective state and case; not only lay meat before them, but feed them with it, that are wilful, and will not; or weak, and cannot feed themselves. When Christ ascended on high, he gave pastors; left his flock with them that loved him, and would take care of them for his sake.

3. But why did he give this charge particularly to Peter? Ask the advocates for the pope's supremacy, and they will tell you, that Christ hereby designed to give to Peter, and therefore to his successors, and therefore to the bishops of Rome, an absolute dominion and headship over the whole Christian church; as if a charge to serve the sheep, gave a power to lord it over all the shepherds; whereas, it is plain, Peter himself never claimed such a power, nor did the other disciples ever own it in him: This charge given to Peter to preach the gospel, is, by a strange fetch, made to support the usurpation of his pretended successors, that fleece the sheep, and, instead of feeding them, feed upon them: But the particular application to Peter here, was designed, 1. To restore him to his apostleship, now he repented of his abjuration of it, and to renew his commission, both for his own satisfaction, and for the satisfaction of his brethren. A commission given to one convicted of a crime, is supposed to amount to a pardon; no doubt, this commission given to Peter, was an evidence that Christ was reconciled to him, else he would never have reposed such a confidence in him. Of some that have deceived us, we say, though we forgive them, we will never trust them; yet Christ, when he forgave Peter, trusted him with the most valuable treasure he had on earth. 2. It was designed to quicken him to a diligent discharge of his office as an apostle. Peter was a man of a bold and zealous spirit, always-forward to speak and act, and lest he should be tempted to take upon him the directing of the shepherds, he is charged to feed the sheep, as he himself charges all the presbyters to do, and not to lord it over God's heritage, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. If he will be doing, let him do this, and pretend no further. 3. What Christ said to him, he said to all his disciples; he charged them all not only to be fishers of men, though that was said to Peter, Luke v. 10. by the conversion of sinners, but feeders of the flock, by the edification of saints.

Secondly, Christ having thus appointed Peter his doing work, next cuts out to him his suffering work: Having confirmed to him the honour of an apostle, he now tells him of further preferment designed him, the honour of a martyr. Observe,

1. How his martyrdom is foretold, ver. 17. *Thou shalt stretch forth thy hand, being compelled to it, and another shall gird thee, as a prisoner that is pinioned, and carry thee whither, naturally, thou wouldest not*.

(1.) He prefaceth this notice he gives to Peter of his sufferings, with a solemn asseveration, *Verily, verily I say unto thee*. It was not spoken of as a thing probable, which, perhaps, might happen, but as a thing certain, *I say it to thee*. Others, perhaps, will say to thee, as thou didst to me, *This shall not be unto thee*; but I say it shall. As Christ forefaw all his own sufferings, so he forefaw the sufferings of all his followers, and foretold them, though not in particular as to Peter, yet in general, that they must take up their crosses. Having charged him to feed his sheep, he bids him not to expect ease and honour in it, but trouble and persecution, and to suffer ill for doing well.

(2.) He foretels particularly that he should die a violent death, by the hands of an executioner: *The stretching out his hand*, some think, points at the manner of his death by crucifying; and the tradition of the antients, if we may rely upon that, informs us that Peter was crucified at Rome, under Nero, A. D. 68. or, as others say, 79. Others think, it points at the bonds and imprisonments, which those are hampered with that are sentenced to death. The pomp and solemnity of an execution, adds much to the terror of death, and, to an eye of sense, makes it look doubly formidable. Death, in these horrid shapes, has oft been the lot of Christ's faithful ones, who yet have overcome it by the blood of the Lamb. This prediction, though pointing chiefly at his death, yet was to have its accomplishment in his precious sufferings: It began to be fulfilled presently, when he was imprisoned, Acts iv. 3. — v. 18. — xii. 4. No more is implied here in his being carried whither he would not, but that it was a violent death he should be carried to; such a death as even innocent nature could not think of without dread, nor approach without some reluctance: He that puts on the Christian, doth not put off the man; Christ himself prayed against the bitter cup: A natural aversion to pain and death, is well reconcileable with a holy submission to the will of God in both: Blessed Paul, though longing to be unloaded, yet owns he cannot desire to be unclothed, 2 Cor. v. 4.

(3.) He compares this with his former liberty: Time was when thou knewest not any of these hardships, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest. Where trouble comes, we are apt to aggravate it with this, that it has been otherwise; and to fret the more at the grievances of restraint, sickness, and poverty, because we have known the sweets of liberty, health, and plenty, Job xxix. 2. Psalm xlii. 4. But we may turn it the other way, and reason thus with ourselves, how many years of prosperity have I enjoyed more than I deserved, and improved? and, having received good, shall not I receive evil also? See here,



1. What a change may possibly be made with us, as to our condition in this world! They that have *girded themselves with strength and honour*, and indulged themselves in the greatest liberties, perhaps, looses, may be reduced to such circumstances as are the reverse of all this: See 1 Sam. ii. 5.

2. What a change is presently made with those that *leave all to follow Christ*? they must no longer *gird themselves*, but he must *gird them*; and must no longer *walk whither they will*, but *whither he will*.

3. What a change will certainly be made with us, if we should live to be old! They that, *when they were young*, had strength of body, and vigour of mind, and could easily go through business and hardship, and take the pleasures they had a mind to, *when they shall be old*, will find *their strength gone*, like Sampson, *when his hair was cut*, and could not *shake himself as at other times*.

Christ tells Peter he should suffer thus in his old age. 1. Though he should be old, and, in a course of nature, not likely to live long, yet his enemies would hasten him out of the world violently, then when he was about to retire out of it peaceably; and would put out his candle, when it was almost burned down to the socket: See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17. 2. God would shelter him from the rage of his enemies, till he should come to be old, that he might be made the fitter for sufferings, and the church might the longer enjoy his service.

2. The explication of this prediction, ver. 19. *This spake he to Peter, signifying by what death he should glorify God*, when he had finished his course. Observe,

(1.) That it is not only *appointed to all once to die*, but it is *appointed to each what death they shall die*, whether natural or violent, slow or sudden, easy or painful: When Paul speaks of *so great a death*, he intimates, that there are degrees of death; there is one way into the world, but many ways out, and God has determined which way we should go.

(2.) That it is the great concern of every good man, whatever death he dies, to glorify God in it; for what is our chief end but this? *To die to the Lord, at the word of the Lord*. When we die patiently, submitting to *the will of God*; die cheerfully, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; and die usefully, witnessing to the truth and goodness of religion, and encouraging others, we glorify God in dying: And this is *the earnest expectation and hope of all good Christians*, as it was Paul's, *that Christ may be magnified in them living and dying*, Phil. i. 20.

(3.) That the death of the martyrs was, in a special manner, for the glorifying of God: The truths of God, which they died in the defence of, are hereby confirmed: The grace of God, which carried them with so much constancy through their sufferings, is hereby magnified; and *the consolations of God*, which *have abounded towards them in their sufferings*, and his promises, the springs of *their consolations*, have hereby been recommended to the faith and joy of all the saints: The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church, and the conversion and establishment of thousands: *Precious therefore in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*, and that which *honours him*, and those that thereby at such an expence *honour him*, he will honour.

3. The word of command he gives him hereupon: *When he had spoken thus*, observing Peter, perhaps, to look blank upon it, *he saith unto him, Follow me*. Probably, he rose from the place where he had sitten at dinner, walked off a little, and bid Peter attend him. This word, *Follow me*, was, 1. A further confirmation of his restoration to his Master's favour, and to his apostleship; for, *Follow me*, was the first call. 2. It was an explication of the prediction of his sufferings, which, perhaps, Peter at first did not fully understand, till Christ gave him that key to it, *Follow me*. Expect to be treated as I have been, and to tread the same bloody path that I have trod before thee; *for the disciple is not greater than his Lord*. 3. It was to excite him to, and encourage him in faithfulness and diligence in his work as an apostle. He had bid him *feed his sheep*, and let him set his Master before him as an example of pastoral care: Do as I have done. Let the under-shepherds study to imitate the chief shepherd. They had followed Christ while he was here upon earth, and, now he was leaving them, he still preaches the same duty to them, though to be performed in another way, *Follow me*; still they must follow the rules he had given them, and the example he had set them: And what greater encouragement could they have than this, both in services and in sufferings? (1.) That herein they did follow him, and it was their present honour; who would be ashamed to follow such a leader? (2.) That hereafter they should follow him, and that would be their future happiness; and so it is a repetition of the promise Christ had given Peter, John xiii. 36. *Thou shalt follow me afterwards*. They that faithfully follow Christ in grace, shall certainly follow him to glory.

20. Then Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21. Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus saith not unto him, He shall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? 24. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. 25. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world it self could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

In these verses we have,

First, The conference Christ had with Peter concerning John, the beloved disciple; in which we have,

(1.) The eye Peter cast upon him, ver. 20. Peter, in obedience to his Master's orders, followed him; and turning about, pleased with the honours his Master now did him, he sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following likewise. Observe here,

1. How John is described; he doth not name himself, as thinking his own name not worthy to be preserved in these records; but gives such a description of himself, as sufficiently informs us who he meant, and withal gives us a reason why he followed Christ so close; *he was the disciple whom Jesus loved*, whom he had a particular kindness for above the rest; and therefore you cannot blame him for coveting to be as much as possible within hearing of Christ's gracious words. During these few precious minutes, he favoured his disciples with his conversation; and, it is probable, mention is here made of John's having *leaned on Jesus's breast*, and his enquiring concerning the traitor, which he did at the instigation of Peter, John xiii. 24. as a reason why Peter made the following enquiry concerning him, to repay him for the former kindness: Then John was in the favourite's place, lying in Christ's bosom, and he improved the opportunity to oblige Peter: And now Peter was in the favourite's place, called to take a walk with Christ, he thought himself bound in gratitude to put such a question for John, as he thought would oblige him, we all being desirous to know things to come. Note, As we have interest at the throne of grace, we should improve it for the benefit of one another: They that help us by their prayers at one time, should be helped by us with ours at another time: This is the communion of saints.

2. What he did; he also followed Jesus; which shews how well he loved his company; where he was, there also would this servant of his be. When Christ called Peter to follow him, it looked as if he designed to have some private talk with him; but such an affection John had to his Master, that he would rather do a thing that seemed rude, than lose the benefit of any of Christ's discourse: What Christ said to Peter, he took as said to himself; for that word of command, *Follow me*, was given to all the disciples: However, he desired to have fellowship with those that had fellowship with Christ, and to accompany those that attended him. The bringing of one to follow Christ, should engage others: *Draw me, and we will run after thee*, Cant. i. 4.

3. The notice Peter took of it; he turning about seeth him: This may be looked upon either, 1. As a culpable diversion from following his Master; he should have been wholly intent upon that, and have waited to hear what Christ had further to say to him, and then was he looking about him to see who followed. Note, The best men find it hard to attend upon the Lord without distraction; hard to keep their minds so closely fixed as they should be, in following Christ: And a needless and unseasonable regard to our brethren often diverts us from communion with God. Or, 2. As a laudable concern for his fellow-disciples: He was not so elevated with the honour his Master did him, in singling him out from the rest, as to deny a kind look to one that followed. Acts of love to our brethren must go along with actings of faith in Christ.

(2.) The enquiry Peter made concerning him, ver. 21. Lord, and what shall this man do? Thou hast told me my work, to feed the sheep; and my lot, to be carried whither I would not: What shall be his work, and his lot? Now this may be taken as the language,

1. Of concern for John, and kindness to him; Lord, thou shewest me a great deal of favour; here comes thy beloved disciple, who never forfeited thy favour, as I have done; he expects to be taken notice of; hast thou nothing to say to him? Wilt thou not tell him how he must be employed, and how he must be honoured?

2. Or of uneasiness at what Christ had said to him concerning his sufferings: Lord, must I alone be carried whither I would not? Must I be marked out to be run down? and must this man have no share of the cross? It is hard to reconcile ourselves to distinguishing sufferings, and the troubles in which we think we stand alone.

3. Or of curiosity, and a fond desire of knowing things to come, concerning others, as well as himself. It seems, by Christ's answer, there was something amiss in the question; when Christ had given him the charge of such a treasure, and the notice of such a trial, it had well become him to have said, Lord, and what shall



shall I do then to approve my self faithful to such a trust, in such a trial? Lord, increase my faith. As my day is, let my strength be. But instead of this,

(1.) He seems more concerned for another, than for himself. So apt are we to be busy in other mens matters; but negligent in the concerns of our own souls; quick sighted abroad, but dim sighted at home; judging others, and prognosticating what they will do, when we have enough to do to prove our own work, and understand our own way.

(2.) He seems more concerned about event, than about duty. John was younger than Peter, and in a course of nature likely to survive him; Lord, faith he, what times shall he be reserved for? Whereas, if God by his grace enable us to persevere to the end, and finish well, and get safe to heaven, we need not ask, what shall be the lot of those that shall come after us? *Is it not well if peace and truth be in my days?* Scripture predictions must be eyed for the directing of our consciences, not the satisfying of our curiosity.

3. Christ's reply to this enquiry, ver. 22. *If I will that he tarry till I come, and do not suffer as thou must; What is that to thee?* Mind thou thy own duty, thy present duty, follow thou me.

1. There seems to be here an intimation of Christ's purpose concerning John, in two things.

(1.) That he should not die a violent death like Peter; but should tarry till Christ himself came by a natural death to fetch him to himself. The most credible of the ancient historians tell us, that John was the only one of all the twelve that did not actually die a martyr. He was oft in jeopardy, in bonds and banishments; but at length died in his bed in a good old age. Note, At death Christ comes to us, to call us to account; and it concerns us to be ready for his coming. 2. Though Christ calls out some of his disciples to resist unto blood, yet not all. Though the crown of martyrdom is bright and glorious, yet the beloved disciple comes short of it.

2. That he should not die till after Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem: So some understand his tarrying till Christ comes. All the other apostles died before that destruction; but John survived it many years. God wisely so ordered it, that one of the apostles should live so long to close up the canon of the New Testament; which John did solemnly, Rev. xxii. 18. And to obviate the design of the enemy that sowed tares even before the servants fell asleep. John lived to confront Ebion and Cerinthus, and other hereticks, who rose betimes, speaking perverse things.

2. Others think it is only a rebuke to Peter's curiosity; and that his tarrying till Christ's second coming, is only the supposition of an absurdity: Wherefore askest thou after that which is foreign and secret? Suppose I should design that John should never die, what doth that concern thee? It is nothing to thee, when, or where, or how John must die. I have told thee how thou must die for thy part; it is enough for thee to know that, follow thou me. Note, It is the will of Christ that his disciples should mind their own present duty, and not be curious in their enquiries about future events, either concerning themselves or others. 1. There are many things we are apt to be solicitous about that are nothing to us. Other peoples characters are nothing to us; it is out of our line to judge them; Rom. xiv. 4. *Whatsoever they are*, faith Paul, *it makes no matter to me*. Other peoples affairs are nothing to us to intermeddle in; we must quietly work, and mind our own business. Many nice and curious questions are put by the Scribes and disputers of this world concerning the counsels of God, and the state of the invisible world, concerning which we may say, *What is this to us?* What do you think will become of such and such? is a common question, which may easily be answered with another; *What is that to me?* To his own Master he stands or falls. What is it to us to know the times and the seasons? Secret things belong not to us. 2. The great thing that is all in all to us is duty, and not event; for duty is ours, events are God's: Our own duty, and not another's; for every one shall bear his own burthen: Our present duty, and not the duty of the time to come; for sufficient to the day shall be the directions thereof: A good man's steps are ordered by the Lord, Psal. xxxvii. 23. he is guided step by step. Now all our duty is summed up in this one, of following Christ; we must attend his motions, and accommodate ourselves to them, follow him to do him honour, as the servant his master; we must walk in the way in which he walked, and aim to be where he is. And if we will closely attend to the duty of following Christ, we shall find neither heart nor time to meddle with that which doth not belong to us.

4. The mistake which arose from this saying of Christ, that that disciple should not die, but abide with the church to the end of time; together with the suppressing of this notion by a repetition of Christ's words, ver. 23. Observe here,

1. The easy rise of a mistake in the church by misconstruing the sayings of Christ, and turning a supposition to a position. Because John must not die a martyr, they conclude he must not die at all.

(1.) They were inclined to expect it, because they could not chuse but desire it. *Quod volumus facile credimus*. For John to abide in the flesh when the rest were gone, and to continue in the world till Christ's second coming, they think will be a great blessing to the church; which in every age might have recourse to him as

an oracle; when they must lose Christ's bodily presence, they hope they shall have that of his beloved disciple: As if that must supply, the want of his; forgetting that the blessed Spirit the comforter was to do that. Note, We are apt to dote too much on men and means, instruments and external helps, and to think we are happy, if we may but have them always with us; whereas God will change his workmen, and yet carry on his work, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men. There is no need of immortal ministers to be the guides of the church, while it is under the conduct of an eternal Spirit.

2. Perhaps they were confirmed in their expectations, when they now found that John survived all the rest of the apostles; because he lived long, they were ready to think he should live always: Whereas that which waxeth old is ready to vanish away, Heb. viii. ult. However it took rise from a saying of Christ's misunderstood, and then made a saying of the church. Hence learn, 1. The uncertainty of human tradition, and the folly of building our faith upon it. Here was a tradition, an apostolical tradition, a saying, that went abroad among the brethren; it was early, it was common, it was publick, and yet it was false. How little then are those unwritten traditions to be relied upon, which the council of Trent hath decreed to be received with a veneration and pious affection equal to that which is owing to the holy scripture. Here was a traditional exposition of scripture, no new saying of Christ's advanced; but only a construction put by the brethren upon what he did really say, and yet it was a misconstruction. Let the scripture be its own interpreter, and explain it self, as it is in a great measure its own evidence, and proves it self, for it is light.

(2.) The aptness of men to misinterpret the sayings of Christ. The grossest errors have sometimes shrouded themselves under the umbrage of uncontestable truths; and the scriptures themselves have been wrested by the unlearned and unstable. We must not think it strange, if we hear the sayings of Christ misinterpreted, vouched to patronize the errors of antichrist; and the impudent doctrine of transubstantiation, for instance, pretending, to build upon that blessed word of Christ, *This is my body*.

2. The easy rectifying of such mistakes by adhering to the word of Christ, and abiding by that. So the evangelist here corrects and controlls that saying among the brethren, by repeating the very words of Christ. He did not say, That that disciple should not die. Let us not say so then; but he said, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* He said so, and no more. Add thou not unto his words. Let the words of Christ speak for themselves, and let no sense be put upon them but what is genuine and natural; and in that let us agree. Note, The best end of mens controversies, would be to keep to the express words of scripture, and speak, as well as think, according to that word, Isa. viii. 20. Scripture language is the safest and most proper vehicle of scripture truth: The words which the holy Ghost teacheth, 1 Cor. ii. 13. As the scripture it self duly attended to is the best weapon wherewith to wound all dangerous errors, and therefore deists, Socinians, papists, and enthusiasts, do all they can to derogate from the authority of the scripture; so the scripture it self humbly subscribed to, is the best weapon-salve to heal the wounds that are made by different modes of expression concerning the same truths. Those that cannot agree in the same logicks and metaphysics, and the propriety of the same terms of art, and the application of them, yet may agree in the same scripture terms, and then may agree to love one another.

Secondly, We have here the conclusion of this gospel, and with it of the evangelical story, ver. 24, 25. This evangelist ends not so abruptly as the other three did, but with a sort of candency.

1. It concludes with an account of the author or penman of it, connected by a decent transition to that which went before, ver. 24. *This is the disciple which testifieth of these things to the present age, and wrote these things for the benefit of posterity, even this same that Peter and his Master had that conference about in the foregoing verses, John the apostle.*

(1.) Observe here, that those who wrote the history of Christ, were not ashamed to put their names to it. John here doth in effect subscribe his name. As we are sure who was the author of the first five books of the Old Testament, which were the foundation of that revelation; so we are sure who were the penmen of the four gospels, and the acts, the pentateuch of the New Testament. The record of Christ's life and death is not the report of *we know not who*, but was drawn up by men of known integrity, who were ready not only to depose it upon oath, but which was more, to seal it with their blood.

(2.) Those that wrote the history of Christ, wrote upon their own knowledge, not by hearsay, but what they themselves were eye and ear witnesses of. The penman of this history was a disciple, a beloved disciple, one that had leaned on Christ's breast, that had himself heard his sermons and conferences, had seen his miracles, and the proofs of his resurrection. *This is he which testifies* what he was well assured of.

(3.) Those that wrote the history of Christ, as they testified what they had seen, so they wrote what they had first testified. It was published by word of mouth with the greatest assurance, before it was committed to writing. They testified it in the pulpit, testified it at the bar, solemnly averred it, stedfastly avowed it, not as travellers give account



account of their travels, to entertain the company, but as witnesses upon oath give account of what they know in a matter of consequence, with the utmost caution and exactness, to found a verdict upon. What they wrote, they wrote as an affidavit, which they would abide by. Their writings are standing testimonies to the world of the truth of Christ's doctrine, and will be testimonies either for us or against us, according as we do or do not receive it.

(4.) It was graciously appointed for the support and benefit of the church, that the history of Christ should be put into writing, that it might with the greater fulness and certainty spread to every place, and last through every age.

2. It concludes with an *attestation of the truth*, of what had been here related. *We know that his testimony is true.* This may be taken either,

(1.) As speaking the common sense of mankind in matters of this nature, which is, that the testimony of one who is an eye-witness, is of unspotted reputation, solemnly deposes what he had seen, and puts it into writing for the greater certainty, is an *unexceptionable evidence*. *We know*, i. e. All the world knows that the testimony of such a one is valid, and the common faith of mankind requires us to give credit to it, unless we can disprove it; and in other cases verdict and judgment is given upon such testimonies. The truth of the gospel comes confirmed by all the evidence we can rationally desire or expect in a thing of that nature. The matter of fact, that Jesus did preach such doctrines, and work such miracles, and rise from the dead, is proved beyond contradiction, by such evidence as is always admitted in other cases; and therefore to the satisfaction of all that are impartial; and then let the doctrine recommend it self, and let the miracles prove it to be of God. Or,

(2.) As speaking the satisfaction of the churches at that time, concerning the truth of what is here related. Some take it for the subscription of the church of Ephesus; others of the angels or ministers of the churches of Asia to this narrative. Not as if an inspired writing needed any attestation from men, or could from thence receive any addition to its credibility; but hereby they recommended it to the notice of the churches, as an inspired writing, and declared the satisfaction they received by it. Or,

(3.) As speaking the evangelist's own assurance of the truth of what he wrote, like that, John xix. 35. *He knows that he saith true.* He speaks of himself in the plural number, *we know*, not for majesty sake, but for modesty sake, as 1 John i. 1. *That which we have seen*; and 2 Pet. i. 16. Note, The evangelists themselves were entirely satisfied of the truth of what they have testified, and transmitted to us. They do not require us to believe what they did not believe themselves; no, they *knew their testimony was true*, for they ventured both this life and the other upon it; threw away this life, and depended upon another, on the credit of what they spoke and wrote.

3. It concludes with an *& cætera*; with a reference to many other things, very memorable, said and done by our Lord Jesus, which were well known by many then living, but not thought fit to be recorded for posterity, ver. 25. There were many things very remarkable and improvable, which if they should be written at large, with the several circumstances of them, even the world it self, i. e. all the libraries in it could not contain the books that might be written. Thus he concludes like an orator; as Paul, Heb. xi. 32. *What shall I more say? for the time would fail me.*

If it be asked why the gospels are not larger, why they did not make the New Testament history as copious and as long as the old; it may be answered,

1. It was not because *they had exhausted their subject*, and had nothing more to write that was worth writing; no, there were many of Christ's sayings and doings not recorded by any of the evangelists, which yet were worthy to be written in letters of gold. For, (1.) Every thing that Christ said and did was worth our notice, and capable of being improved. He never spoke an idle word, nor did an idle thing; nay, he never spoke or did any thing mean or little, or trifling, which is more than can be said of

the wisest or best of men. (2.) His miracles were many, very many, of many kinds, and the same oft repeated, as occasion offered. Though one *true miracle* might, perhaps, suffice to prove a divine commission, yet the repetition of the miracles upon a great variety of persons, in a great variety of cases, and before a great variety of witnesses, helped very much to prove them true miracles. Every new miracle rendered the report of the former the more credible; and the multitude of them render the whole report uncontestable. (3.) The evangelists upon several occasions give general accounts of Christ's preaching and miracles, inclusive of many particulars, as *Mat. iv. 23, 24.—ix. 35.—xi. 1.—xiv. 14, 15.—xviii. 30.—xix. 2.* and many the like. When we speak of Christ, we have a copious subject before us, the reality exceeds the report, and after all, *the one half is not told us*. St. Paul quotes one of Christ's sayings, which is not recorded by any of the evangelists, *Acts xx. 35.* and doubtless there were many more. All his sayings were apophthegms.

2. But it was for these three reasons,

1. Because *it was not needful to write more*. This is implied here; there were many other things which were not written, because there was no occasion for writing them. What is written, is a sufficient revelation of the doctrine of Christ and the proof of it, and the rest was but to the same purpose. They that from hence argue against the sufficiency of the scripture, as the rule of our faith and practice, and for the necessity of unwritten traditions, ought to shew what there is in the traditions they pretend to, perfective of the written word, we are sure there is that which is contrary to it, and therefore reject them. By these therefore *let us be admonished, for of writing many books there is no end*, Eccl. xii. 12. If we do not believe and improve what is written, neither would we if there had been much more.

2. *It was not possible to write all*. It was possible for the Spirit to indite all, but *morally impossible* for the penmen to pen all. *The world could not contain the books*. It is an hyperbole common enough, and justifiable, when no more is intended but this, that it would fill a vast and incredible number of volumes. It would be such a large and overgrown history as never was; such as would juggle out all other writings, and leave us no room for them. What volumes would be filled with Christ's prayers, had we the record of all those he made, when he *continued all night in prayer to God*, without any vain repetitions? Much more if all his sermons and conferences were particularly related; his miracles, his cures, all his labours, all his sufferings; it would have been an endless thing.

2. *It was not advisable to write much*; for the world, in a moral sense, *could not contain the books that should be written*. Christ said not what he might have said to his disciples, *because they were not able to bear it*; and for the same reason the evangelists wrote not what they might have written. *The world could not contain, χωρησαι*. It is the word that is used, John viii. 37. *My word has no place in you*; they would have been so many, that they would have found no room. All peoples time would have been spent in reading, and other duties would thereby have been crowded out. Much is overlooked of what is written, much forgotten, and much made the matter of doubtful disputation, much more if there had been such a world of books of equal authority and necessity as the whole history would have swelled to; especially since it was requisite, that what was written should be *meditated upon, and expounded*, which God wisely thought fit to leave room for. Parents and ministers in giving instruction, must consider the capacities of them they teach, and like Jacob, must take heed of over driving. Let us be thankful for the books that are written, and not prize them the less for their plainness and brevity, but diligently improve what God has thought fit to reveal, and long to be there, where our capacities shall be so elevated and enlarged, that there will be no danger of their being over-loaded.

The evangelist concluding with, *Amen*, thereby sets to his seal, and let us set to ours; an *Amen* of faith subscribing to the gospel that it is true, all true; and an *Amen* of satisfaction in what is written as able to make us wise to salvation. *Amen*; so be it.

